SAGAS OF THE SEA, SHIPS, PLUNDER AND...

PIRACY

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NO. 6
SEPT.

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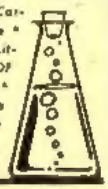

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Scan by Fett !!

FIT FOR A KING

THE SEA IS NEVER PARTICULAR ABOUT WHERE IT CASTS ITS FLOTSAM. AND SO, THE HUMAN DERELICT LAY CURLED BEFORE THE FIREPLACE OF THE NOISY INN. HE TREMBLED IN HIS SLEEP, AS IF FEAR AND EVIL HAUNTED HIS DREAMS... AS IF NOW HE COULD SEE THE TALL SHIPS BURNING AND HEAR THE BOOM OF THE CANNON. HE EVEN CRIED ALOUD FROM TIME TO TIME. OUTSIDE, A COLD NOVEMBER RAIN DELUGED THE PORT OF FALMOUTH. THE SEAMEN WHO CROWDED THE *LAMB AND CROWN* WERE RESTLESS AND IMPATIENT WITH THE SQUALL WHICH KEPT THEM INDOORS. ONE OF THEM TURNED TO THE HUMAN DERELICT, PRODDED HIM WITH HIS TOE, AND HELD OUT A TANKARD...

WAKE UP, ADAM! COME ON! SPIN US A YARN T' PASS THE TIME. TELL US ABOUT HOW YOU SAILED WITH *LONG BEN AVERY, THE KING OF PIRATES!*
KING?... *KING?* BEN AVERY WAS NO *KING!* HE WAS A *FOOL!*

AYE, A FOOL WHO TOOK A KING'S RANSOM IN *JEWELS* FROM THE *GREAT MOGUL!* I THINK I WOULD LIKE TO *BE* SUCH A FOOL...
THINK WHAT YOU LIKE! BUT LEAVE ME BE. I'M SICK! ...SICK! THERE'S A FEVER HOT WITHIN ME...

GROG! AYE... *THAT'S* WHAT I NEED! GROG... TO KILL THE BURNING IN MY LUNGS...
HO! NOT SO *FAST*, ADAM! FIRST THE *YARN!* GROG MUST BE *EARNED!* TELL US ABOUT LONG BEN...
1

THE DERELICT ROSE...SLOWLY...PAINFULLY. HIS LUNG-SICKNESS HAD WASTED HIS FLESH. HIS EYES BURNED...

"AYE, I SAILED WITH AVERY. I WAS THERE WHEN IT ALL BEGAN. I KNEW HIM WELL. A MAN WHO KNEW WHAT HE WANTED, AND MEANT TO HAVE IT...THE DEVIL TAKE THE PRICE..."

ALL RIGHT! I'LL *TELL* YOU ABOUT LONG BEN AVERY! BUT NOT JUST FOR *GROG!* I'LL TELL YOU, BECAUSE I'VE *LEARNED!* A MAN MUST *PAY* FOR HIS SINS!

WELL, LADS, WHAT *SAY* YOU? THE CHOICE IS YOURS! A LIFETIME AT SEA WITH NOTHING TO *SHOW* FOR IT? OR *GOLD*...*WINE*...*WOMEN!* WHICH WILL IT BE?

IT BEGAN HERE... IN ENGLAND. AVERY WAS QUARTERMASTER OF *THE CHARLES*, THEN. HE WAS RESPECTED...A MAN WITH A WIFE...A SON... A HOME. BUT HE *THREW IT AWAY!* FOR *WHAT!?*

FOR A *FORTUNE!*

NO! FOR *MISERY!* HE *WON* HIS FORTUNE! TEN TIMES OVER! BUT AT WHAT *COST?!* WHEN *THE CHARLES'* CREW SHOULD HAVE BEEN LOADING *STORES*, HE HAD THEM BELOW...LISTENING TO TALK OF *MUTINY!*

"AND THEY LISTENED WELL. THERE WERE SEVENTEEN IN *THE CHARLES'* CREW. SEVENTEEN MEN WHO STOOD BY A FORTNIGHT LATER...AND SAW THEIR CAPTAIN MURDERED..."

BEAUTIFUL...*BEAUTIFUL!* ALL MY *LIFE* I'VE DREAMED OF DIAMONDS...OF RUBIES, BIG AS HEN'S EGGS...EMERALDS LIKE THIS ONE!

INTO THE YARDS! LAY ALOFT! 'TIS DONE! THE CHARLES IS *OURS!* WE SAIL FOR *MADAGASCAR! MOVE LIVELY!* I WANT *SAIL!*

"*MADAGASCAR*...AYE! WE SAILED FOR *MADAGASCAR*... FOR THE FREEBOOTERS' PORT OF *LOMAR*, AND ON OUR WAY, THERE WAS A MERCHANTMAN..."

CAP'N! SHE FLIES THE *ENGLISH FLAG!*

WHAT MATTER *WHAT* FLAG SHE FLIES! SHE'LL BE FAT WITH *STORES*... AND 'TIS A LONG VOYAGE TO *MADAGASCAR*...

BUT SHE'S *ENGLISH*, LIKE *US*, CAP'N! WE *CAN'T*...

UGH...

CAN'T!? SCUM! WHO GIVES THE *ORDERS* HERE!?

"AVERY WAS A MADMAN WITH ONLY ONE DREAM...ONE THOUGHT. WE BLASTED THE MERCHANTMAN, AND WHILE SHE WAS BURNING, WE BOARDED 'ER..."

QUARTER! WE BEG *QUARTER!*

QUARTER!? *WE'LL* GIVE YOU QUARTER...

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES! CUT THEM ALL DOWN!

"THE LUST FOR LOOT DOES STRANGE THINGS TO MEN. WE STRIPPED THE MERCHANTMAN AND LEFT HER. A MONTH LATER, IN MADAGASCAR, THE OTHER PIRATE CAPTAINS LEARNED WHAT DROVE AVERY..."

THE MOCHA FLEET! YOU'RE MAD! IT WOULD TAKE A DOZEN SHIPS OF THE LINE TO TAKE THE GREAT MOGUL'S TREASURE SHIP!

MAD...PERHAPS. BUT WITH A MADNESS THAT SPELLS LOOT! LOOT SUCH AS YOU NEVER DREAMED OF!

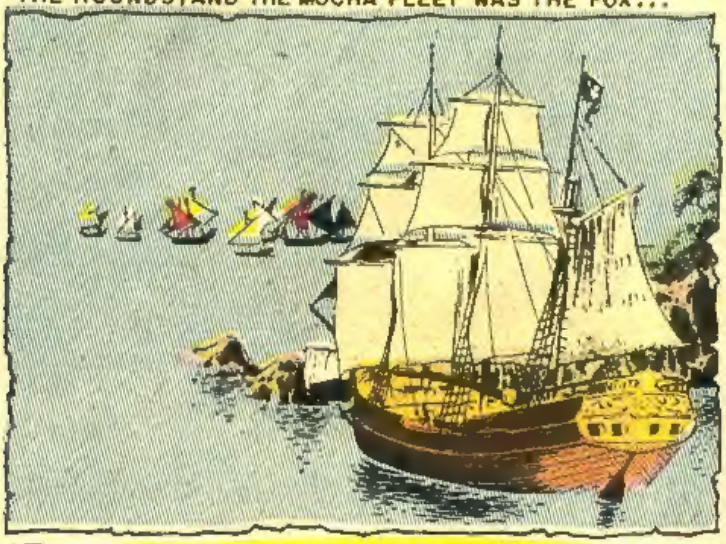
YOUR TWO SHIPS ARE *SLOOPS! SMALL* SHIPS! *FAST* SHIPS! HAVE YOU EVER SEEN *HOUNDS* TAKE A *FOX?* THEY *DRIVE* HIM...*HARRY* HIM...

THE GREAT MOGUL IS *NOT* A FOX, BUT A *WOLF!*

THE MOCHA FLEET CARRIES MOSLEM PILGRIMS TO JEDDA... PILGRIMS ON THEIR WAY TO MECCA! THEY WILL BE PROTECTED BY *FIGHTING SHIPS!*

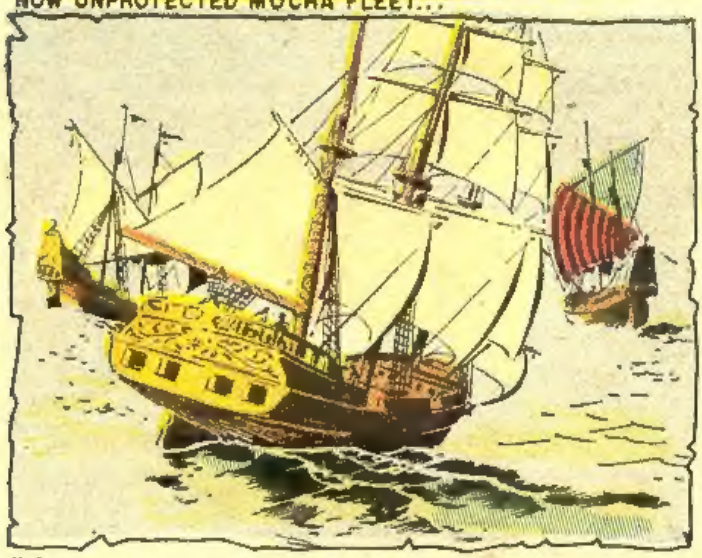
TRUE! BUT I HAVE A *PLAN!* WILL YOU *LISTEN*... OR ARE YOU *OLD WOMEN?*

"OLD WOMEN? THEY? AVERY COZENED THEM... AND THEY WERE MEN WHO LOVED GOLD AND GLITTERING GEMS. WE SAILED. *THE CHARLES* AND THEIR TWO SLOOPS. WE WERE THE HOUNDS, AND THE MOCHA FLEET WAS THE FOX..."

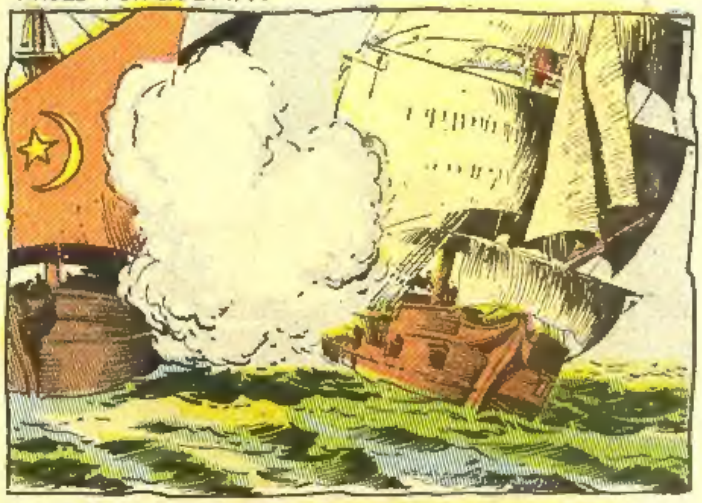


"FIRING THEIR CANNON, THE TWO SLOOPS CLOSED IN ON THE FLEET, ONE FROM EACH SIDE. THE ESCORTING *FELUCCAS* RETURNED THEIR FIRE, GIVING CHASE AS THE SLOOPS TURNED AND RAN FOR IT..."

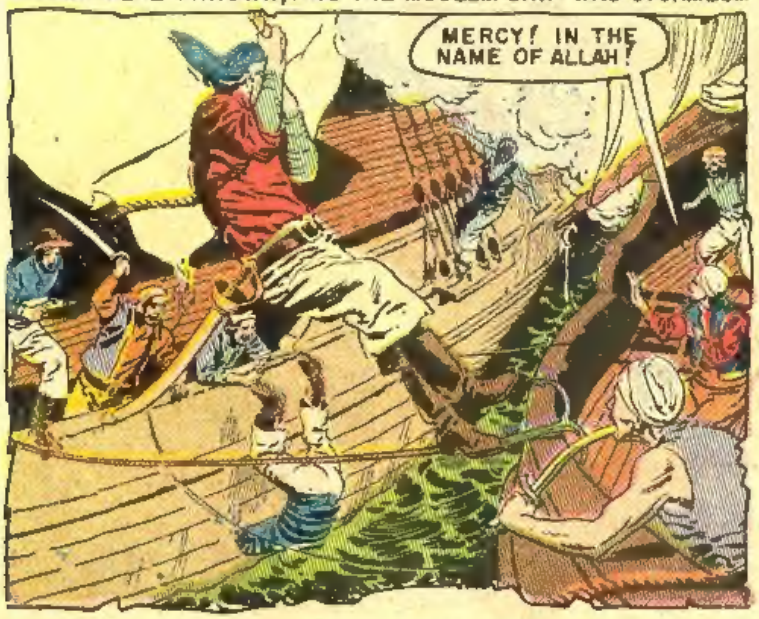
"*THE CHARLES*, FULL SAILED, THEN CAME FROM HER HIDING PLACE BEHIND THE ROCKY HEADLAND WHERE SHE'D BEEN WAITING, AND BORE DOWN UPON THE NOW UNPROTECTED MOCHA FLEET..."



"HE WAS A STRATAGIST, WAS AVERY. *THE FELUCCAS* WAS FAR OFF AND THE MOSLEM FLEET WAS HELPLESS PREY. HE PICKED HIS TARGET, THE MOGUL'S TREASURE SHIP, AND ATTACKED, CANNON FIRING AT POINTBLANK RANGE, WHILE THE OTHER SHIPS OF THE MOCHA FLEET RACED FOR SAFETY..."



"AND WHEN *THE CHARLES* WAS CLOSE ENOUGH, GRAPPLING HOOKS WERE THROWN, AND THE MOSLEM SHIP WAS STORMED..."



"THERE WAS GOLD... JEWELS... CARGO... THE MEN TOOK WHAT THEY WOULD AND DID WHAT THEY DID, AND AVERY DID NOT INTERFERE. HE WAS BELOW. HE'D TAKEN *HIS* PRIZE..."

"AVERY PLAYED WITH THE SPARKLING STONES...BATHED THEM. THEN CHOSE THE BEST! DIAMONDS AND RUBIES! HE HUNG THEM IN A LEATHER POUCH ABOUT HIS NECK. THE REST, HE LEFT FOR THE CREW..."

"THE REST WAS TRASH TO AVERY. *HE* WAS CLEVER. *HE* WOULD NOT END HIS DAYS AT THE END OF A HANGMAN'S ROPE. IN MADAGASCAR, AFTER THE BOOTY HAD BEEN SHARED, HE DESERTED HIS CREW AND *THE CHARLES*..."

"HE WENT OVERLAND. HE FOUND A SHIP TO TAKE HIM TO THE GOLD COAST AS A PASSENGER. AND FROM THERE, HE SAILED FOR AMERICA. IN AMERICA, HIS LOOT WOULD MAKE HIM A PRINCE, HE THOUGHT. BUT IT WAS NOT TO BE..."

PRETTY, MISTER BLODGETT! *VERY* PRETTY! YOUR STONES ARE OF THE *FINEST QUALITY!* I *KNOW!* IN ENGLAND, I *DEALT* IN JEWELRY!

SO I'VE *HEARD!* THAT'S WHY I'VE *COME* TO YOU! YOU CAN *SELL* THEM FOR ME, THEN? FOR A *COMMISSION?*

SELL THEM!? BUT, TO *WHOM?* THESE ARE THE *COLONIES*, MR. BLODGETT. LIFE IS *HARD!* WHO WOULD WANT DIAMONDS AND RUBIES *HERE?* WHAT *ARE* WANTED HERE ARE *PLOWS*... *TOOLS*... *SEED*...

AN IRON *PLOW* IS *WITHOUT PRICE* HERE! BUT... *DIAMONDS!* NO, I FEAR YOU HAVE MADE YOUR LONG VOYAGE FOR *NOTHING!* YOU WILL FIND NO BUYERS FOR YOUR TRINKETS IN THE *COLONIES*, MR. BLODGETT!

TRINKETS! DO YOU *UNDERSTAND?* FOR EVERY STONE, A MAN HAD *DIED*. AND YET, THEY WERE *JUST TRINKETS!*

AYE, IN THE *COLONIES*, PERHAPS! BUT EVERY CHILD OVER SIX KNOWS THAT AVERY RETURNED TO *ENGLAND!*

RETURNED, YES! BUT NOT TO *HAPPINESS!* NOT TO HIS *FAMILY!* HE RETURNED TO LEARN THAT *THE CHARLES* HAD BEEN *TAKEN!* THAT ONLY A *FEW* OF HIS CREW HAD *ESCAPED*. THAT THERE WAS A *PRICE* ON HIS HEAD!

AND A *FORTUNE* IN A LEATHER POUCH ABOUT HIS *NECK!*

"A FORTUNE HE NEVER ENJOYED! THOUGH THE TALES SAY DIFFERENTLY! LONG BEN AVERY RETURNED TO ENGLAND, YES. BUT, IN THE THIEVES' MARKET, IN LONDON, HE LEARNED A BITTER LESSON..."

YOU WERE *PROMPT*, AVERY! *WELCOME*...

WE'LL NOT BOTHER WITH FORMALITIES! YOU HAVE HAD THE STONES I LEFT WITH YOU *VALUED*? HOW MUCH WILL YOU *PAY* FOR THEM?

QUICKLY! I HAVE NO TIME TO *WASTE*! THE KING'S MEN ARE *EVERYWHERE*! I NEED CASH FOR *TRAVELLING*! I HAVE BARELY A SHILLING TO MY PURSE...

HOW MUCH WILL I *PAY*? WHY, *NOTHING*, AVERY! *NOTHING*! I'M *ACCEPTING* THE STONES YOU LEFT WITH ME ...AS A *GIFT*!

A *GIFT*! *SO*! YOU INTEND TO *ROB* ME, EH? YOU *CHEATING SWINE*! I'VE SPILLED BETTER BLOOD THAN *YOURS*!

SOFTLY, AVERY! *SOFTLY*! WOULD YOU CALL THE KING'S MEN? WHAT CAN YOU *DO*? COMPLAIN TO THE *AUTHORITIES*? NO, I *THINK NOT*!

YOU ARE A *FOOL*, MY FRIEND! AND A FOOL AND HIS LOOT ARE *SOON PARTED*!

UNNNNGGGG!

"THEY LEFT AVERY LYING IN THE SNOW. FOR A DAY AND A NIGHT HE LAY THERE. AND THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE END. AFTERWARDS, THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIM... IN HIS HEAD..."

"THE IRONY OF IT. AVERY HAD DIAMONDS AND RUBIES. BUT HE NO LONGER THOUGHT CLEARLY. AND WHEN HE DID, WHERE COULD HE TAKE HIS TREASURE? HIS STRANGENESS GREW... DAY BY DAY..."

NOT YET! I'M *NOT* DONE *YET*, *AM* I, MY LITTLE BEAUTIES? THE FAT PIG DIDN'T *KNOW* I HAD *OTHER* LITTLE SWEETHEARTS IN MY POUCH!

HE SAT BY THE SEA, DAY AFTER DAY, STARING! HE GREW RAGGED! HE STARVED! *THAT* WAS YOUR *KING*! A *KING*, *YES*! A KING OF *FOOLS*!

AND *NOW*! WHERE IS AVERY *NOW*! DO YOU *KNOW*? HAVE YOU *SEEN* HIM?

YES! I'VE SEEN HIM! BUT I'LL SEE HIM NO MORE! IN THE END, YOUR...KING SAW THE WASTE OF HIS LIFE. IN THE END HE GAVE HIMSELF UP...TO BE PUNISHED FOR HIS CRIMES!
AVERY!? A MAN LIKE AVERY!? GAVE HIMSELF UP! ADAM, YOU SPIN FINE YARNS! BUT YOU ARE ALSO THE WORLD'S GREATEST LIAR!

YOU'RE A BAG OF WIND WHO KNEW LONG BEN AVERY NO MORE THAN I KNEW HIM! ADMIT IT!
I DID SAIL WITH AVERY! I TELL YOU, I DID! DON'T LAUGH AT ME! DON'T...

THE RAIN HAD STOPPED BY THEN. THE CHILL WAS BITTER...THE FOG THICK, LIKE THE WRITHING MIASMA WHICH FILLS A NIGHTMARE. THE DERELICT FLED *THE LAMB AND CROWN*...

...AND WALKED ALONG THE DOCKS TILL HE CAME TO THE BUILDING WHERE THE KING'S SOLDIERS WERE QUARTERED. HE HESITATED, THEN REMOVED A WORN SOILED LEATHER POUCH FROM AROUND HIS NECK....

NONE SAW HIM SMILE SADLY AND STEP TO THE DOOR NONE SAW HIM KNOCK, WAIT, THEN ENTER. ALL WAS SILENCE WHEN THE DOOR TO *THE LAMB AND CROWN* SPILLED LIGHT ONCE AGAIN INTO THE MURKY NIGHT...

LONG BEN! WHY HE'S PROBABLY LIVING ON SOME ISLAND IN THE WESTERN SEA RIGHT NOW...WITH SLAVE GIRLS TO WAIT ON HIM AND GOLD COINS FOR A CUSHION! BUT... IT WAS A GOOD YARN!
HA-HA-HA...
MY NAME IS BEN AVERY... LONG BEN AVERY. I'VE COME TO GIVE MYSELF UP! I'VE COME FOR MY PUNISHMENT!
THE END

SCUTTLEBUTT

Dear Editors,

The latest issue of PIRACY was shoved into my hands by my neighborly newsdealer today, and I gracefully accepted (coughing up 10c, of course!). It's a great mag, without a doubt, the best of its kind on the newsstands today. I didn't particularly care for sea stories in the past, but now I am sufficiently addicted to repeat the above incident once every two months.

Kenn Curtis
Cincinnati, Ohio

Piracy tops them all.

Tom Loman
Cresskill, N.J.

I want to praise you on your fine magazine. I am a Sea Scout (ship 240, Hancock) and everybody in our crew reads PIRACY. I especially like the way Jack Davis draws ships. The slang is all authentic. Most of your imitators use their own made-up sayings. I think you should start a pirate club derived from the name of your excellent comic.

Chuck Robertson
Sea Scout Ordinary
Hancock, Mich.

I have just picked up your latest hit in the magazine business, PIRACY. I think it's the best idea you guys at E.C. have thought up in a long time.

Wm. Gohl
Philadelphia, Pa.

Boy, the fourth issue of PIRACY is the best yet. In all your comics, you always get better as you go along. I can hardly wait for the next issue. Krigstein is really getting good.

Mike Oliveri
ECFA No. 455
Washington, D.C.

Sorry, boys, but you goofed. In "Inheritance," that is! True, the Bastille fell in 1789, but the Republic was not declared until 1792, the Reign of Terror did not begin until January of 1793, with the execution of Louis XVI. It did not properly start till May. The queen, Marie Antoinette, was executed in October. So the log entry in the story shows a prophecy of four years in the future. Otherwise, I thoroughly enjoyed PIRACY No. 4. In answer to Bob Blanchette's question in Scuttlebutt: "How many more untopable mags can you put out?" I believe the score is now six.

E. Nelson Bridwell
Oklahoma City, Okla.

The latest issue of PIRACY is priceless. When PIRACY hit the stands, I didn't think it would last. If you continue to publish more like No. 4, you can't miss. I am very happy to admit that I was wrong.

Lanny Rice
ECFA No. 1325
Athens, Ga.

. This mag is IT! Every page is a work of art. The covers are wonderful. Now I buy two mags just to cut out the pictures from one and frame them.

Dennis Rullo
Astoria, N.Y.

You really are sea-sick to print such utter drivel, as you do in PIRACY. To quote one of your own phrases, you ought to be keel-hauled. Furthermore, I think your whole line of comics is rot. You wouldn't dare print this.

An Irate Reader
N.Y.C.

I would like to point out a mistake you make on every cover of PIRACY. The guy that draws the ship on the left-hand side draws the sails being blown one way, and the flag on the mast being blown the other way.

Joey Robertson
Eagle Pass, Texas

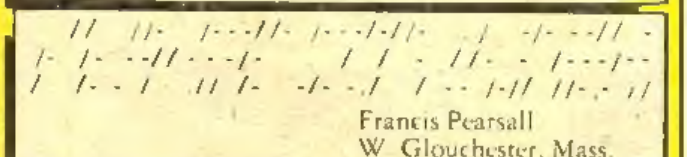
We'll have to take a different tack, Joey!—ed

I find that you're the only comic mag company that cares about its readers at all. What's more, your stories are thrilling and your pictures are exact. Your unexpected endings, such as in your story "Pirate Master," are certainly very unique. When I read your wonderful stories, I seem to forget all of my worries, and float away with the adventurous crews that romp through the pages of your profound comic magazine, PIRACY.

Paul Ortloff
Richmond Hill, N.Y.

PIRACY is the best book ever. If you keep up the good work, you'll be the only publishers in the business. E.C. stands for "Everybody's Comics."

Edward Lempel
Flushing, L.I.



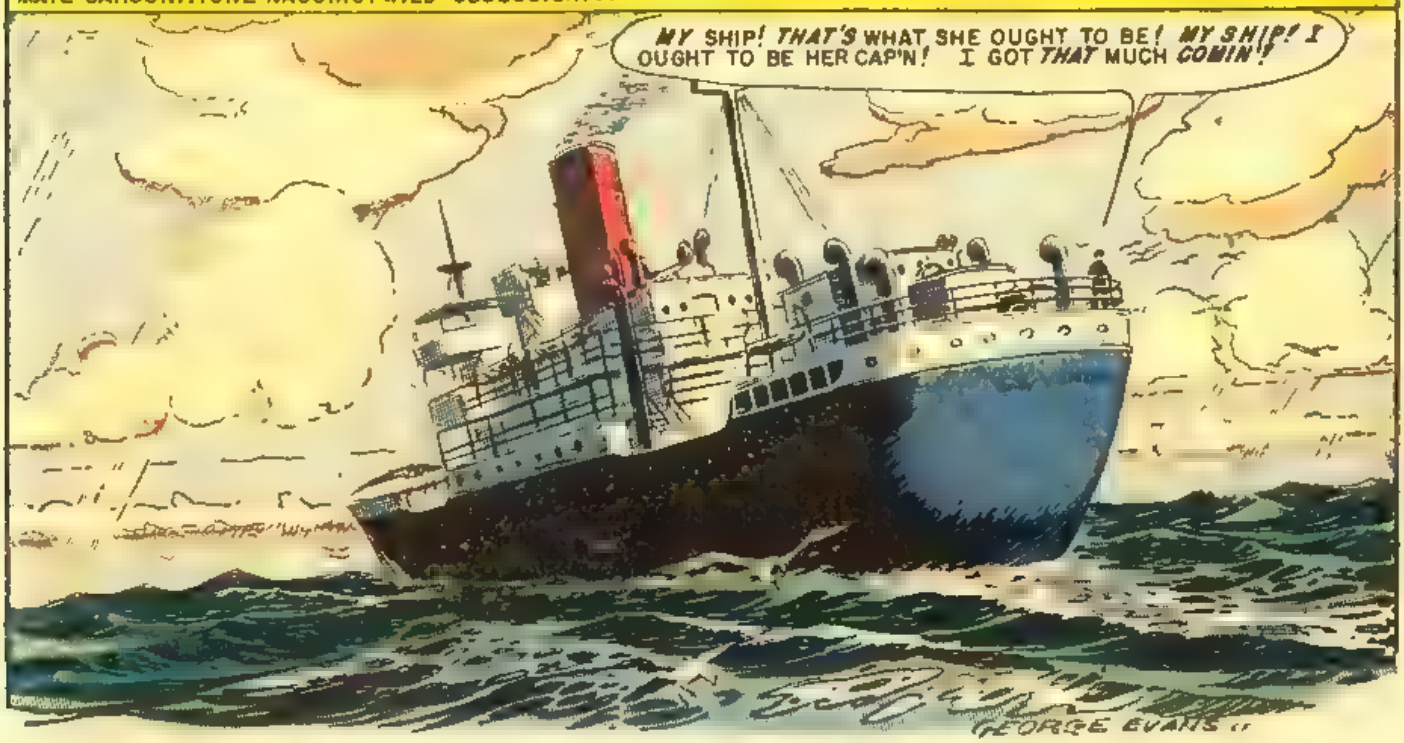
Francis Pearsall
W. Glouchester, Mass.

Before you run for your Morse Code book to decode the above letter, we'll close with an invitation for signals from you land lubbers with something to say. The address for such missives is:

Sea-Sick Editors
Room 706, Dept. 6
225 Lafayette St.
N.Y.C. 12

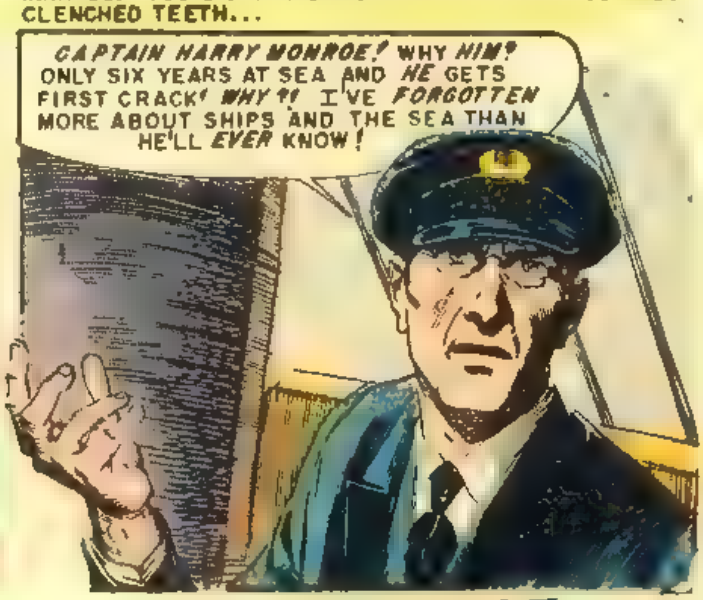
THE SKIPPER

SHE'S LIKE UNDULATING GLASS, THIS SEA.. LIKE THE BOSOM OF A GIANT MAIDEN IN A GREEN SILKEN GOWN, BREATHING HEAVY IN THE CRISP, TANGY NOVEMBER AIR THE ICE-BLUE SKY ABOVE FORMS A BACKDROP FOR FLEECY COTTON PUFFS THAT LAZE OVER THE DISTANT HORIZON. BUT YOU'VE NO CONCERN WITH SUCH POETIC TABLEAUX, RICHARD CARSON ...YOU, WITH THE ANGRY YEARNING GLEAM IN YOUR EYES! YOU LEAN MOODILY ON THE TAFFRAIL OF THE FREIGHTER *YORKTON*, STARING INTO HER FOAMING WAKE YOU FEEL THE VIBRATIONS OF HER ENGINES THROUGH THE DECK PLATES BENEATH YOUR FEET, THROBBING IN CHORUS WITH THE THROBBING IN YOUR HEAD. YOU'VE ONE THOUGHT, FIRST MATE CARSON...ONE NAGGING, WILD OBSESSION...



AYE, SHE'S A TRIM SLEEK SHIP, THIS *YORKTON*. SHE'S NEW... AND FAST... DESERVING OF A FIRST-RATE SKIPPER. BUT THAT'S NOT YOU, IS IT, MR. CARSON?...

THE MERE THOUGHT OF HIS NAME GNAWS AT YOUR INNARDS. YOU SAY IT AGAIN. YOU SPIT IT OUT BETWEEN CLENCHED TEETH...


CAPTAIN HARRY MONROE! WHY *HIM?* ONLY SIX YEARS AT SEA AND *HE* GETS FIRST CRACK! *WHY?!* I'VE *FORGOTTEN* MORE ABOUT SHIPS AND THE SEA THAN HE'LL *EVER* KNOW!

YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE SKIPPER, HAVEN'T YOU, CARSON? AND ALWAYS, THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER MEN TO SNATCH AWAY THE REALIZATION OF YOUR DREAM...

THESE THINGS'RE *FIXED!* NOBODY CAN TELL ME THEY'RE *NOT* FIXED! "*WHY?*" I ASK 'EM... AND THEY ANSWER WITH A LIE! "YOU'RE NOT QUITE *RELIABLE*, CARSON!" THEY SAY. "AFTER ANOTHER TRIP." IT'S *ALWAYS* ANOTHER TRIP BUT THERE IS *NEVER* A SHIP OF MY OWN!

A SHIP OF MY OWN! OH, TO BE MASTER OF SOME BEAUTY LIKE THIS *YORKTON!* TO STAND ON HER BRIDGE AND KNOW SHE'S MINE! TO GUIDE HER WITH THESE HANDS! *CHOKE*... IT'LL *NEVER* COME TO PASS! *NEVER!* THEY GOT IT *IN* FOR ME!

THE SURGING HATE FILLS YOU TO BURSTING. THE SELF-PITY. THE SENSE OF PERSECUTION! IT BLINDS YOU, CARSON. AND HURT, YOU STUMBLE FORTH, WANTING ONLY TO HURT IN RETURN..

THIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN *MY* SHIP! IT *ISN'T!* BUT IF *I* CAN'T HAVE HER, *NO ONE* WILL!

SO YOU START YOUR CAMPAIGN OF SPITE AND HATE. AND YOU FEEL A GLOW OF SATISFACTION AS A SEAMAN BREATHLESSLY REPORTS TO CAPTAIN MONROE...

IT'S THE *PORT ANCHOR*, SIR! I HEARD THE CHAIN CLANK AND THE SPINNIN' OF THE CAPSTAN! BY THE TIME I GOT FOR'D, WHOEVER *DONE* IT WAS *GONE!* AN' THE *ANCHOR* WAS GONE *TOO*, SIR!

WHOEVER DID *WHAT*, HAMMOND? THE FAULT MAY HAVE BEEN WITH THE *CAPSTAN ITSELF!*

NO, SIR! I LOOKED 'ER OVER! SHE'S IN TIP-TOP SHAPE! NO SPECK OF RUST ON THE PAWLS TO KEEP 'EM FROM DROPPIN' INTO THE RATCHETS! I

THEN SOMEBODY WAS *CARELESS*, HAMMOND! I *CAN'T* BELIEVE THAT IT WAS *DELIBERATE!* THAT'LL BE ALL!

SOON AFTERWARD, THEY FIND MORE TROUBLE.. MORE OF YOUR HANDIWORK, MR. CARSON! AND YOU CHUCKLE INWARDLY AT THEIR GRAVE CONCERN...

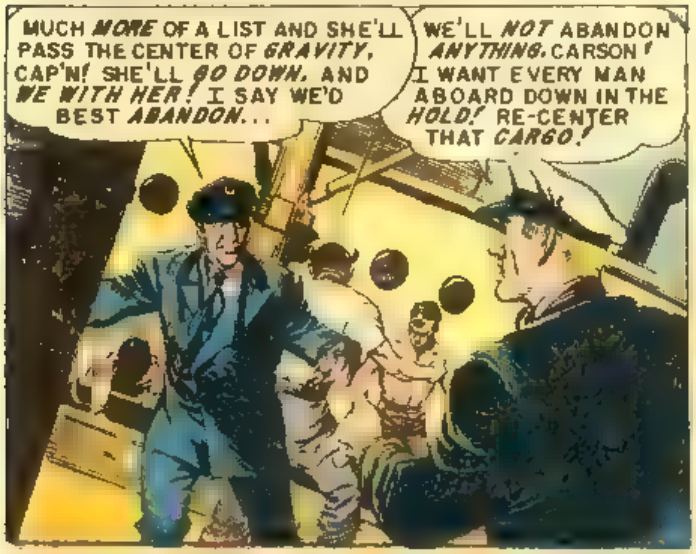
THIS SHIP'S CLOCK'S BEEN SMASHED *ON PURPOSE*, SIR! NO OTHER WAY IT COULD'VE *HAPPENED!*

AN *ANCHOR* LOST... AND NOW *THIS!* WE CAN *MAKE DO* WITHOUT THE *CLOCK*. AND WE'VE *GOT* SPARE *ANCHORS* BUT WHAT WORRIES *ME*, CARSON, IS WHAT'LL IT BE *NEXT!?*.

BLANDLY, YOU PROMISE TO KEEP A WEATHER EYE OUT FOR THE CULPRIT UNKNOWN. AND FIVE MINUTES LATER, YOU'RE IN THE HOLD, SETTING ABOUT MORE MISCHIEF..

NOW NOW THE CARGO'LL SHIFT TO *STARB'D!* *HEAVY STUFF* IT IS! SHE'LL *LIST A-PLENTY!*

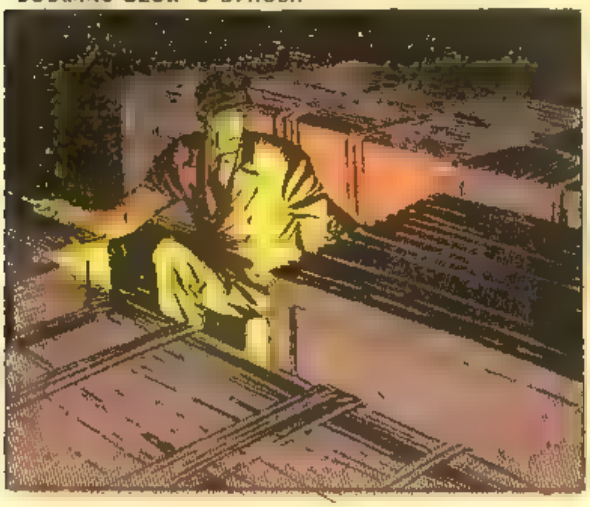
THEN YOU WAIT... AND BY THE END OF AN HOUR, THE *YORKTON* IS LEANING HEAVILY TO STARBOARD, IN DANGER OF CAPSIZING...


MUCH *MORE* OF A LIST AND SHE'LL PASS THE CENTER OF *GRAVITY*, CAP'N! SHE'LL *GO DOWN*, AND *WE WITH HER!* I SAY WE'D BEST *ABANDON*...
WE'LL *NOT* ABANDON *ANYTHING*, CARSON! I WANT EVERY MAN ABOARD DOWN IN THE *HOLD!* RE-CENTER THAT *CARGO!*

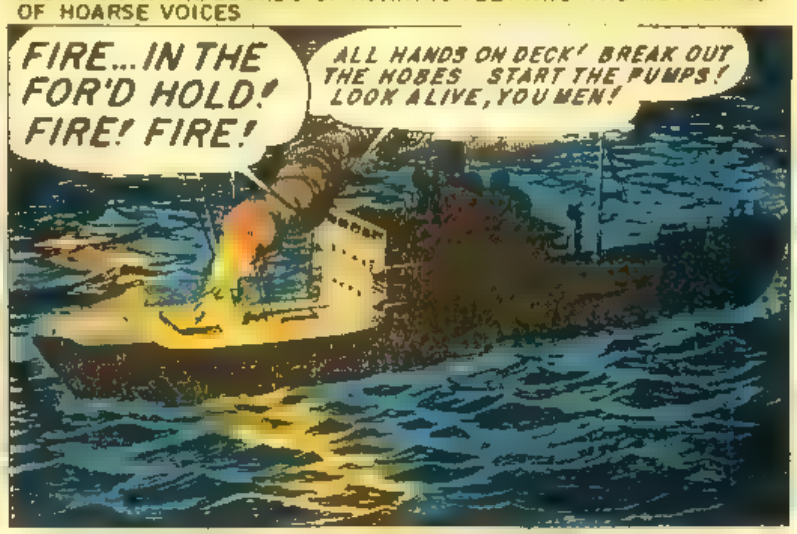
THE MEN STRUGGLE WITH THE LOOSENED CARGO AND SLOWLY THE *YORKTON* IS RIGHTED. LATER, WHEN CAPTAIN MONROE FACES YOU, YOU LAUGH INWARDLY AT HIS ANXIOUS EXPRESSION, WHILE WEARING AN OUTWARD MASK OF INNOCENCE...

CARSON, *YOU* KNOW THE MEN BETTER THAN *I!* DO YOU KNOW OF ANYONE WHO'S *DISGRUNTLED?* I MEAN, MAYBE ONE OF 'EM'S GOT A *BEEF*, AND..
NONE THAT I *KNOW OF*, SIR! BUT IF I *FIND OUT*, I'LL LET YOU KNOW *AT ONCE!*

YOUR DIRTY WORK CONTINUES. IN YOUR DOUBLE ROLE OF RESPONSIBLE OFFICER AND CRANK, EACH DEED PROGRESSES MORE DELIBERATE THAN THE LAST. AND NOW, FIRST MATE RICHARD CARSON, IN THE FORWARD HOLD, THE DOOMING BLOW IS STRUCK



WITHIN MINUTES COMES THE MOST TERRIFYING CRY HEARD ABOARD SHIP.. THE CRY THAT SENDS THE CHILL OF FEAR THROUGH THE BRAVEST OF MEN.. THE CRY THAT FILLS THE DANK MISTY NIGHT WITH THE SOUNDS OF RUNNING FEET AND THE MUTTERING OF HOARSE VOICES



AS THE FLAMES ROAR FROM THE HATCHES, CASTING DANCING SHADOWS OF THE DESPERATE FIREFIGHTERS, YOU GO IN SEARCH OF THE CAPTAIN...

AS CAPTAIN MONROE RUSHES OFF TO DIRECT THE FIGHT AGAINST THE RAGING FIRE, YOU STROLL LEISURELY TO THE WHEELHOUSE TO CARRY OUT HIS ORDER.

SO I'M *UNRELIABLE*, AM I?! NOT TO BE TRUSTED WITH A SHIP OF MY *OWN*, EH?! WELL, 'FORE I'M THROUGH, YOU'LL *PAY* FOR MY DISSAPOINTMENT! YOU'LL *PAY*!

YOU PASS THE WORD AND THE HELMSMAN BRINGS THE *YORKTON* ABOUT...

SHE'S BEEN A *HARD LUCK SHIP* THIS TRIP, MR CARSON!

AYE, MACDOUGAL! AND WE'RE *STILL* A THOUSAND MILES FROM PORT!

A THOUSAND MILES FROM A PORT WE'LL *NEVER REACH*, I'LL *SEE* TO THAT! YOU SWIVELCHAIR BIG-SHOTS. YOU WITH YOUR MONEY AND YOUR HIGH AND MIGHTY WAYS! WHEN *I'M* THROUGH, YOU'LL *WISH* I'D BEEN THE *YORKTON'S* SKIPPER LIKE I *DESERVE* TO BE!

NOW, AS YOU SCAN THE FOG-BOUND SEA BEFORE YOU, A NEW PLAN FORMS IN YOUR ROILING BRAIN...

I'LL TAKE THE WHEEL, MACDOUGAL! *YOU* GO LEND A *HAND* DOWN THERE!

BUT... YES, SIR!

SLOWLY, THE STRUGGLING MEN ON THE DECK BELOW BRING THE FIRE UNDER CONTROL. YOU SMILE, CARSON. THIS WILL BE YOUR FINAL CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT... YOU CHECK THE COURSE-CHART AND THEN...

IT'S *ALL RIGHT*, M'LADS! *THAT* WAS ONLY A *GAME* A *FEINT*... A *PLAY* FOR *TIME*! *NOW*...

A DENSE PALL OF SMOKE ENSHROUDS THE *YORKTON* NOW, AS YOU WORK SWIFTLY AT THE COMPASS BOX BEFORE THE WHEEL.

NOW YOU'LL SEE, YOU HIGH AND MIGHTYS BACK THERE IN YOUR PLUSH OFFICES! YOU LARDERHEADS SAYIN' WHO *MAY* AND WHO MAY *NOT* BE CAP'N OF A SHIP!

SLOWLY, THE COMPASS COMES LOOSE FROM THE BOX. YOU LIFT IT OUT... FEEL IN YOUR POCKET FOR WHAT YOU'VE BROUGHT.

NOW YOU'LL SEE...

AND YOU USE IT. YOU DO SOMETHING TO THE COMPASS, AND THEN REPLACE IT IN ITS BOX.

NOW...

THEN YOU RESET THE COMPASS AND A WILD LIGHT GLOWS THROUGH YOUR EYES...

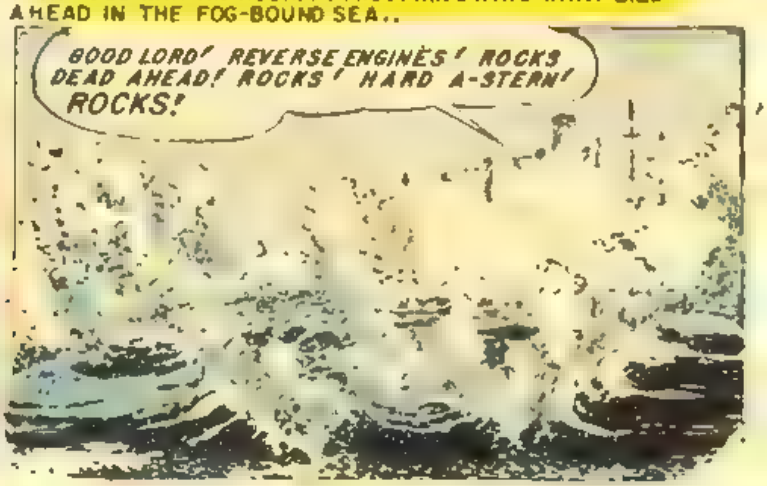
YOU STEP BACK AS YOU SEE MACDOUGAL CROSSING THE DECK, RETURNING TO THE STEPS LEADING UP TO THE WHEEL HOUSE. YOUR MOUTH IS DISTORTED BY A HALF-MAD GRIN...

A MISERABLE NIGHT, MR. CARSON! FOG AND SMOKE HANGIN' ON THE YORKTON LIKE A SHROUD! BUT WE'VE LICKED THE FIRE!
GOOD! YOU CAN TAKE THE WHEEL BACK, MACDOUGAL!

MACDOUGAL TAKES THE HELM. AS YOU START AWAY, HE CALLS AFTER YOU...

SHALL I BRING 'ER BACK ABOUT, SIR?
AYE! BRING 'ER BACK ON COURSE, MACDOUGAL! BETTER STICK CLOSE T' THE COMPASS IN THIS FOG... WITH NO STARS TO GUIDE YOU!

STICK BY THE COMPASS! THE COMPASS THAT YOU'VE MADE TO LIE, CARSON! THAT'S YOUR PLAN, ISN'T IT? YOU KNOW THESE WATERS! YOU KNOW THEM WELL! YOU'VE CHECKED THE CHART AND FIXED THE COMPASS! NOW, YOU WAIT. YOU WAIT AN HOUR...TWO...KNOWING WHAT LIES AHEAD IN THE FOG-BOUND SEA..



YOU WAIT, AND YOU ARE REWARDED BY THE BOW LOOKOUT'S CRIES OF WARNING..THEN, THE GRATING, CRUNCHING, SHATTERING CRASH AS THE YORKTON'S MOMENTUM CARRIES HER JOLTINGLY FORWARD ONTO THE RAZOR-SHARP ROCKS...

YOU LISTEN, WITH GLEE TO THE GRINDING, THUNDERING CRASH... THE HISSING OF STEAM FROM HER SHATTERED BOILERS...THE CONFUSED SHOUTS OF THE MEN POURING FROM BELOW STAGGERING ALONG THE PITCHED DECKS TO THE SWINGING LIFEBOATS

AND YOU, FIRST MATE RICHARD CARSON ...YOU STAND CALMLY ON THE AFTER-DECK . GLORYING IN YOUR SPITEFUL VENGEANCE WATCHING THE CREW OF THE *YORKTON* JAM THE LIFEBOATS.. LOWER AWAY.. AND DISAPPEAR INTO THE FOG...

THE NIGHT IS OMINOUSLY QUIET. YOU STUMBLE OVER HER TILTED DECKS, WHILE THE DESERTED *YORKTON* CLINGS PRECARIOUSLY TO THE JAGGED ROCKS...

AT LAST YOU FIND THE CABIN.. HIS CABIN... MONROE'S CABIN. YOU KICK THE DOOR IN... WILDLY..

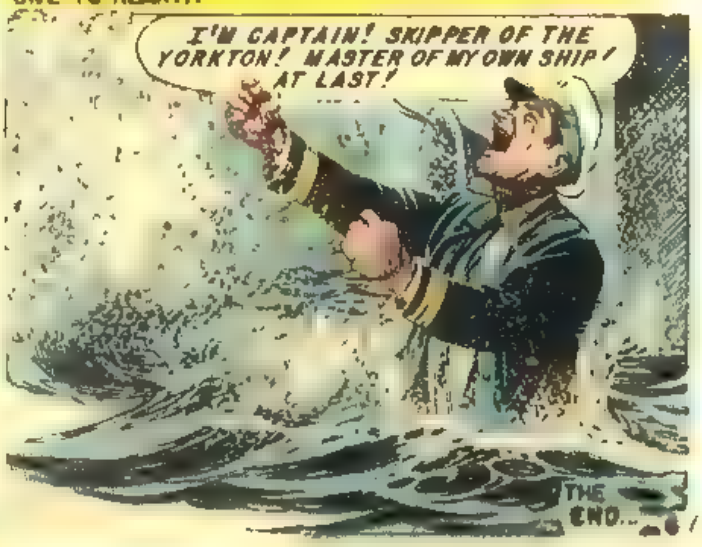
YOU HURL YOUR FIRST MATE'S CAP ASIDE AND PICK UP THE CAPTAIN'S. YOU THROB WITH EXCITEMENT AT THE CROWN OF AUTHORITY YOU PLACE UPON YOUR HEAD...

YOUR DREAM HAS COME TRUE, CARSON! YOU'RE CAPTAIN, NOW! CAPTAIN OF YOUR OWN SHIP! AND THEN THE *YORKTON*, AS THOUGH ANGERED BY YOUR AUDACITY, ROARS AND SLIPS SLOWLY SEAWARD FROM THE ROCKS...

YOU DASH TO THE BRIDGE, LAUGHING AND SHOUTING, AS YOUR SHIP, NOW FREE, SLIPS FURTHER AND FURTHER INTO THE FOAMING SEA...

YOU STAND ON THE BRIDGE, GIGGLING.. RAVING...BEATING YOUR CHEST.. WHILE THE *YORKTON* SETTLES SLOWLY.. THE BRINE RUSHING THROUGH HER SHATTERED BOW..ACROSS HER DECK. YOU STAND BY THE RAIL, WEEPING WITH A KIND OF JOY

AND, AS THE SEA WASHES ABOUT YOUR FEET AND CLIMBS TO YOUR KNEES... YOUR WAIST..YOUR WILD, TRIUMPHANT WORDS RING OUT INTO THE FOG... FOR NO ONE TO HEAR...



THE END...

FUR CRAZY

EVEN IN THE REMOTEST IGLOO VILLAGES, FRIGHTENED ESKIMOS SPOKE OF GUS MARKER IN FEARFUL WHISPERS, DREADING THE TIME WHEN HE WOULD SWOOP DOWN ON THEIR HUNTING GROUNDS, AND, WITH HIS RUTHLESS CREW, WANTONLY SLAUGHTER THE SEAL HERDS WHICH WERE THEIR MAINSTAY FOR FOOD AND CLOTHING. BUT GUS MARKER, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, WAS IN NO CONDITION TO DO ANY SWOOPING. HIS WHALER PILED UP ON AN ICEBERG. HIS CREW DEAD... HE WAS DESPERATELY STRUGGLING FOR HIS OWN LIFE IN THE NUMBING, FRIGID, ARCTIC WATERS...

I... I *CAN'T* DIE LIKE *THIS!* NOT *ME!* NOT... *GUS MARKER!*

ONLY A MAN WITH MARKER'S BRUTE STRENGTH COULD HAVE SURVIVED THE PARALYZING SHOCK OF THE DEADENING ARCTIC SEA. DESPITE THE AGONIZING COLD, HE LIVED TO REACH A BLEAK SHORE. BUT HIS TORTURED CRIES FOR HELP CAME BACK TO MOCK HIM, AS THE HOLLOW ECHO OF HIS VOICE RESOUNDED AMONG THE SILENT IGLOOS

LIKE A STRICKEN ANIMAL, HE CRAWLED INTO THE NEAREST IGLOO, SEEKING WARMTH AND COMFORT AND FOOD

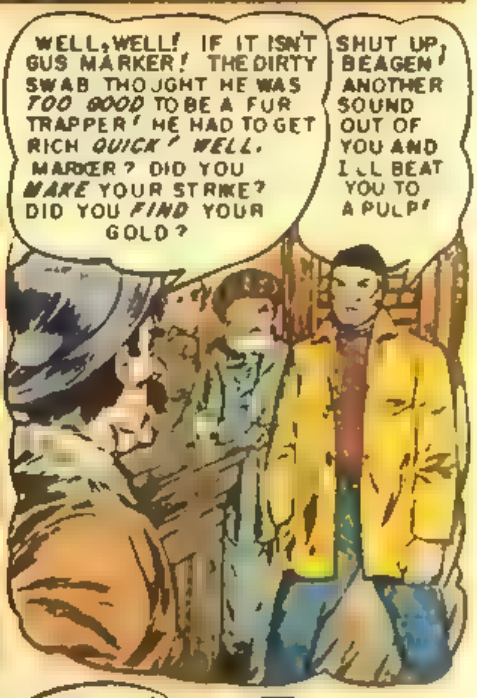
GONE... CHOKE THEY'RE *ALL GONE*...

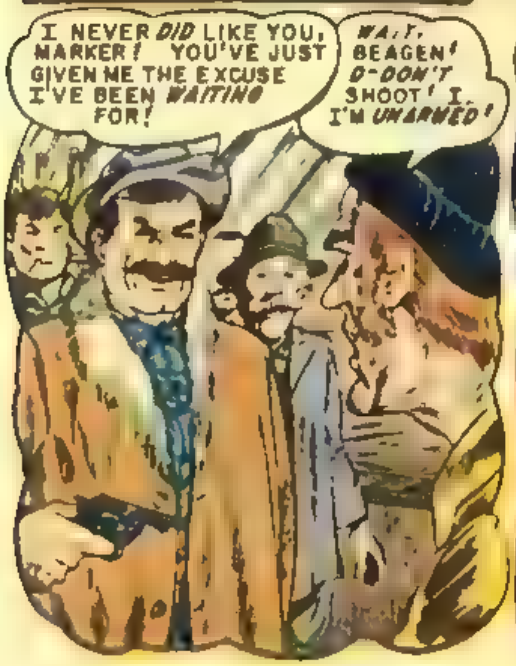
BUT THERE WAS NO FOOD. NOT A MORSEL. FRANTICALLY, MARKER STAGGERED FROM THE IGLOO AND MOVED TO THE NEXT... AND THE NEXT...

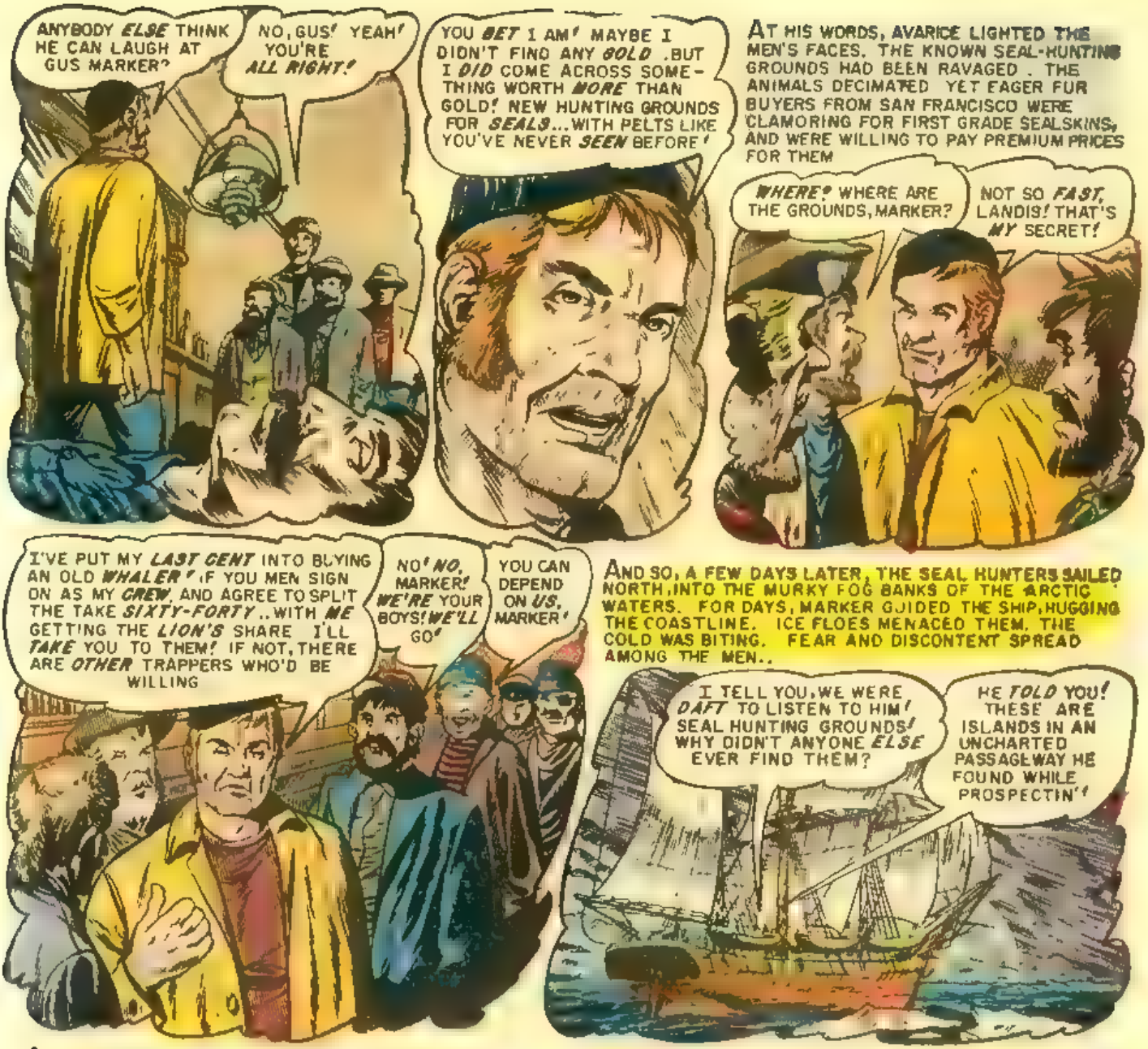
HUNGRY AND COLD, MARKER FOUND AN EMPTY IGLOO AND, SAFE FROM THE BITING WIND, HE BURROWED UNDER A PILE OF ROTTING FURS, TRYING TO THAW HIS FROZEN BLOOD...

...AND AS THE SOOTHING WARMTH OF THE FURS SLOWLY DROVE THE NUMBNESS FROM HIS LIMBS, DROWSINESS GRADUALLY OVERCAME HIM. A WORD... A NAME HISSED HUSKILY FROM HIS STIFFENED, FROZEN LIPS. MEMORIES STIRRED IN HIS BRAIN. PARADED BEFORE HIS DULLED EYES LIKE WRAITHS RISEN FROM UNMARKED GRAVES...

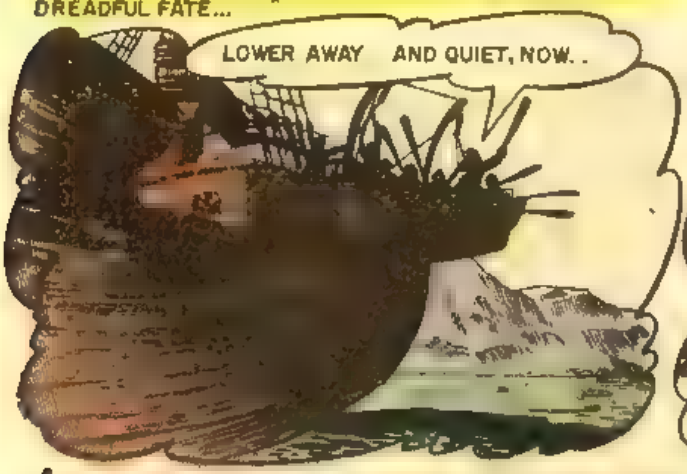
AND HE SAW HIMSELF IN ANOTHER DAY WHEN HE'D PUSHED OUT OF THE YUKON MOUNTAINS, BROKEN AND HUNGRY, INTO THE CRUDE SETTLEMENT KNOWN AS ANDAK...


WELL, WELL! IF IT ISN'T GUS MARKER! THE DIRTY SWAB THOUGHT HE WAS *TOO GOOD* TO BE A FUR TRAPPER! HE HAD TO GET RICH *QUICK*! WELL, MARKER? DID YOU *MAKE* YOUR STRIKE? DID YOU *FIND* YOUR GOLD?
SHUT UP, BEAGEN! ANOTHER SOUND OUT OF YOU AND I'LL BEAT YOU TO A PULP!



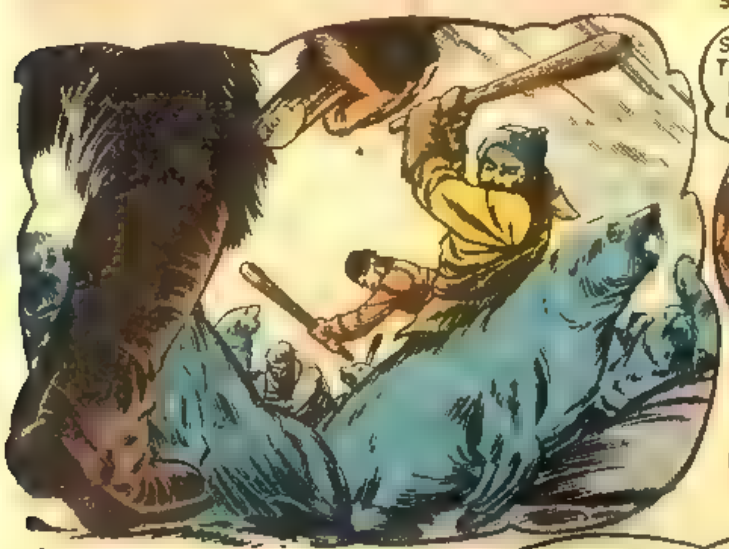

ANYBODY ELSE THINK HE CAN LAUGH AT GUS MARKER?
NO, GUS! YEAH! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
YOU BET I AM! MAYBE I DIDN'T FIND ANY GOLD .BUT I DID COME ACROSS SOMETHING WORTH MORE THAN GOLD! NEW HUNTING GROUNDS FOR SEALS...WITH PELTS LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE!
AT HIS WORDS, AVARICE LIGHTED THE MEN'S FACES. THE KNOWN SEAL-HUNTING GROUNDS HAD BEEN RAVAGED . THE ANIMALS DECIMATED YET EAGER FUR BUYERS FROM SAN FRANCISCO WERE CLAMORING FOR FIRST GRADE SEALSKINS, AND WERE WILLING TO PAY PREMIUM PRICES FOR THEM
WHERE? WHERE ARE THE GROUNDS, MARKER?
NOT SO FAST, LANDIS! THAT'S MY SECRET!
I'VE PUT MY LAST CENT INTO BUYING AN OLD WHALER! IF YOU MEN SIGN ON AS MY CREW, AND AGREE TO SPLIT THE TAKE SIXTY-FORTY..WITH ME GETTING THE LION'S SHARE I'LL TAKE YOU TO THEM! IF NOT, THERE ARE OTHER TRAPPERS WHO'D BE WILLING
NO! NO, MARKER! WE'RE YOUR BOYS! WE'LL GO!
YOU CAN DEPEND ON US, MARKER!
AND SO, A FEW DAYS LATER, THE SEAL HUNTERS SAILED NORTH, INTO THE MURKY FOG BANKS OF THE ARCTIC WATERS. FOR DAYS, MARKER GUIDED THE SHIP, HUGGING THE COASTLINE. ICE FLOES MENACED THEM. THE COLD WAS BITING. FEAR AND DISCONTENT SPREAD AMONG THE MEN..
I TELL YOU, WE WERE DAFT TO LISTEN TO HIM! SEAL HUNTING GROUNDS! WHY DIDN'T ANYONE ELSE EVER FIND THEM?
HE TOLD YOU! THESE ARE ISLANDS IN AN UNCHARTED PASSAGEWAY HE FOUND WHILE PROSPECTIN'!
AT THE END OF TWO WEEKS, MARKER FOUND THE PASSAGE . AND THREE DAYS LATER, THE SEALS WERE SIGHTED .
THERE THEY ARE! LOOK, YOU GUYS! SEALS! HUNDREDS OF 'EM! I SAID...
WHERE? WHERE? LET ME HAVE THE 'SCOPE...
AN EXULTANT YELL TORE FROM THE THROATS OF THE EXCITED MEN. THEY COULD SEE THEM NOW. HUNDREDS OF SEALS, FAT AND SLEEK, WITH GLISTENING COATS OF PRICELESS FUR

IN A MOMENT, THE SHIP WAS A SCENE OF ACTIVITY AS THE HUNTERS PREPARED FOR THE KILL. CLUBS WERE HANDED OUT TO ALL HANDS. FOR SEALS WERE HUNTED IN A BRUTAL FASHION: A BLOW AT THE BASE OF THE SKULL SLEW THE ANIMAL WITHOUT DAMAGING THE FUR. AND THE SEALS, SO GRACEFUL IN THE WATER, WERE TOO CLUMSY AND LUMBERING ON LAND TO ESCAPE THIS DREADFUL FATE...



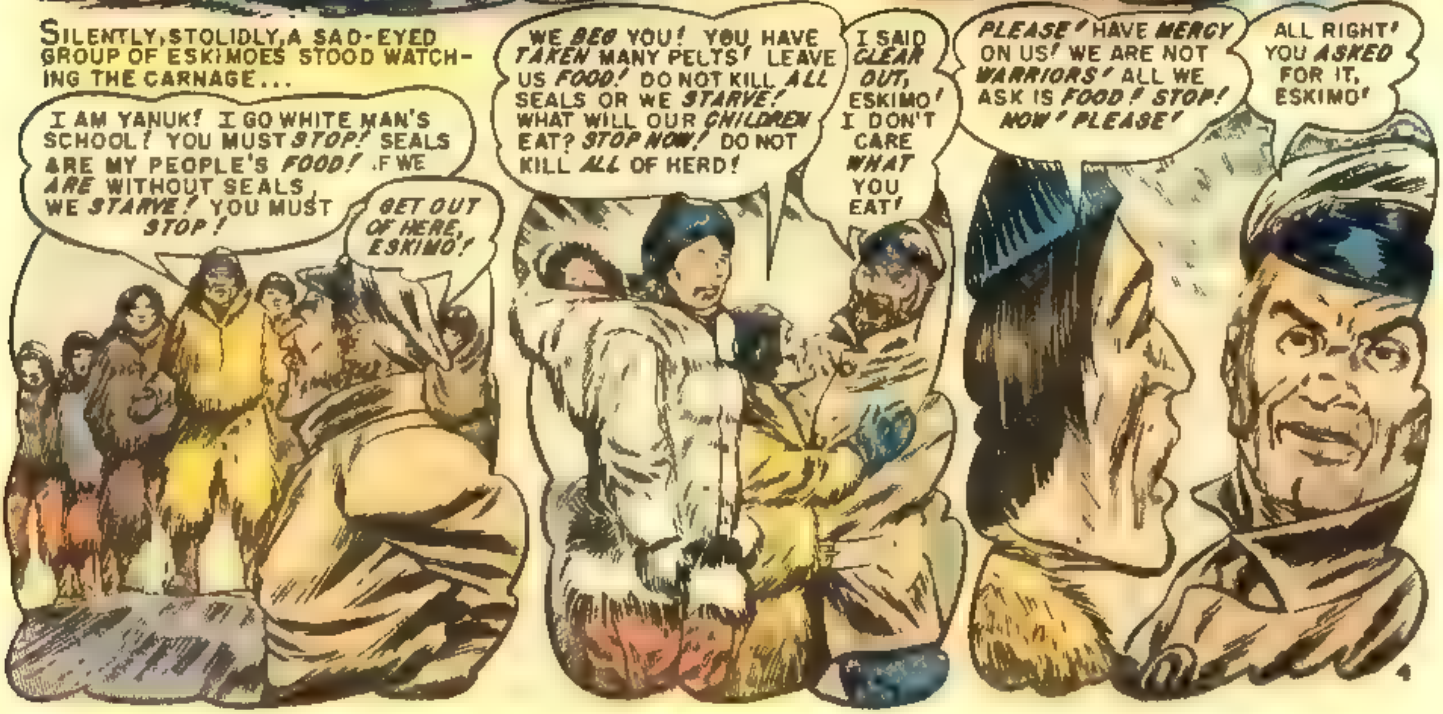
CAREFULLY APPROACHING THE SUNNING SEALS ON THE WINDWARD SIDE, THE HUNTERS QUIETLY ROWED ASHORE...

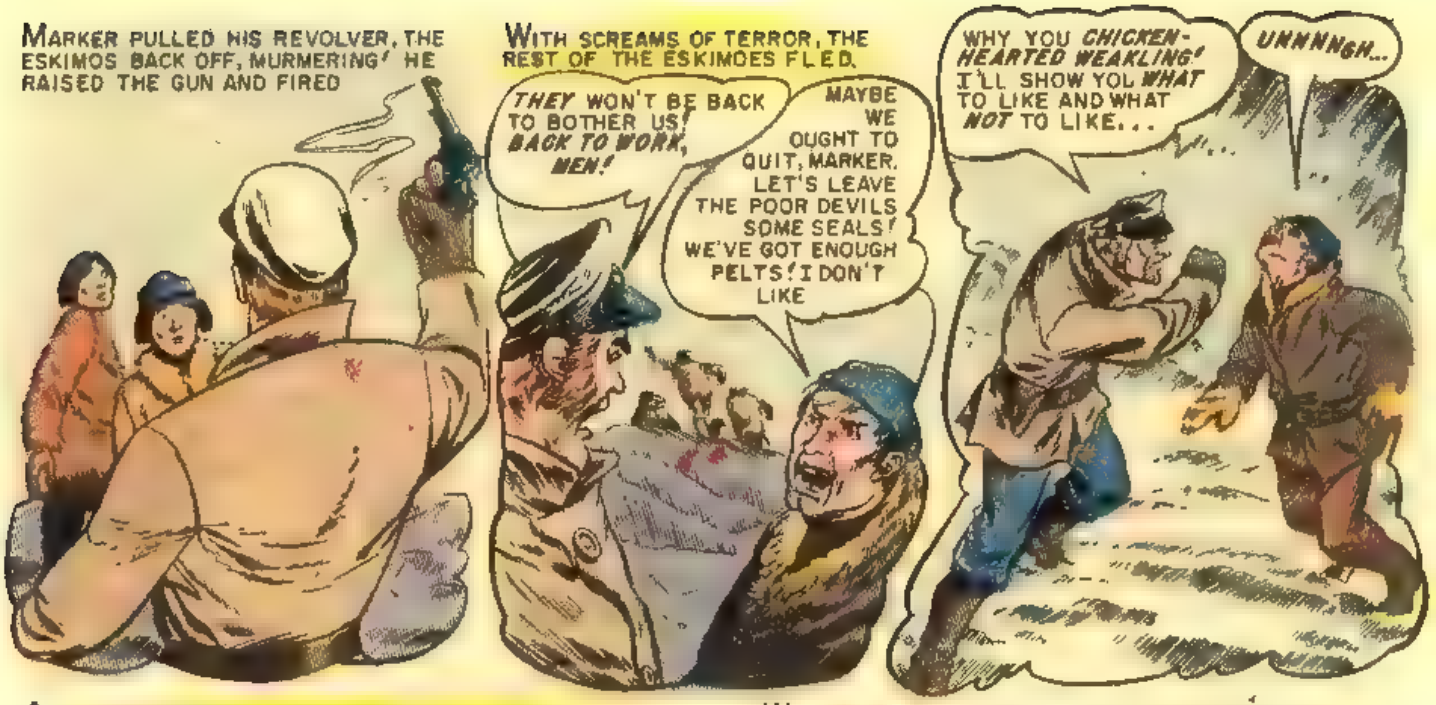
A CIRCLE WAS FORMED AND THE HUNTERS CLOSED IN ON THE SEALS.

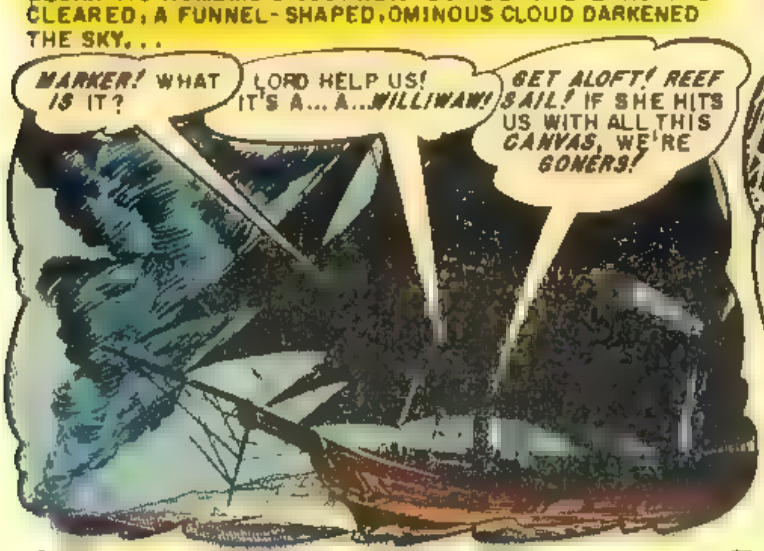


FOR HOURS, THE KILLING CONTINUED. WHILE SOME CLUBBED, OTHERS OF MARKER'S MEN BEGAN SKINNING THE DEAD SEALS.

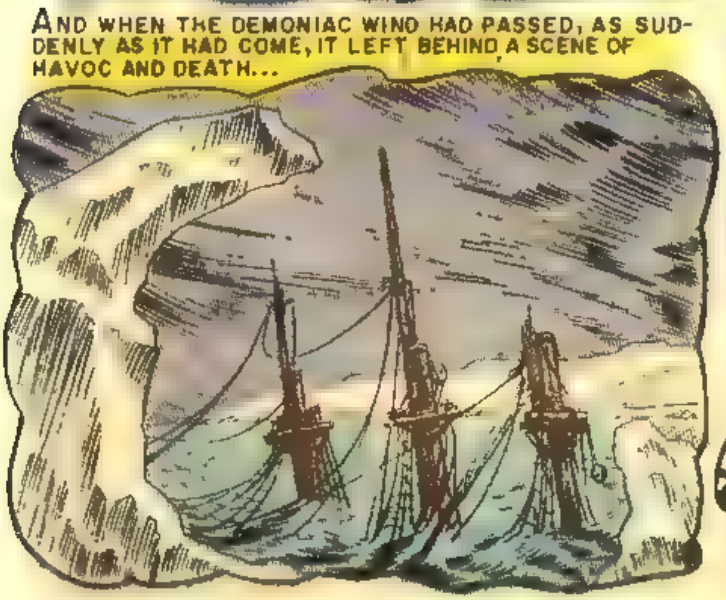
SILENTLY, STOLIDLY, A SAD-EYED GROUP OF ESKIMOES STOOD WATCHING THE CARNAGE...

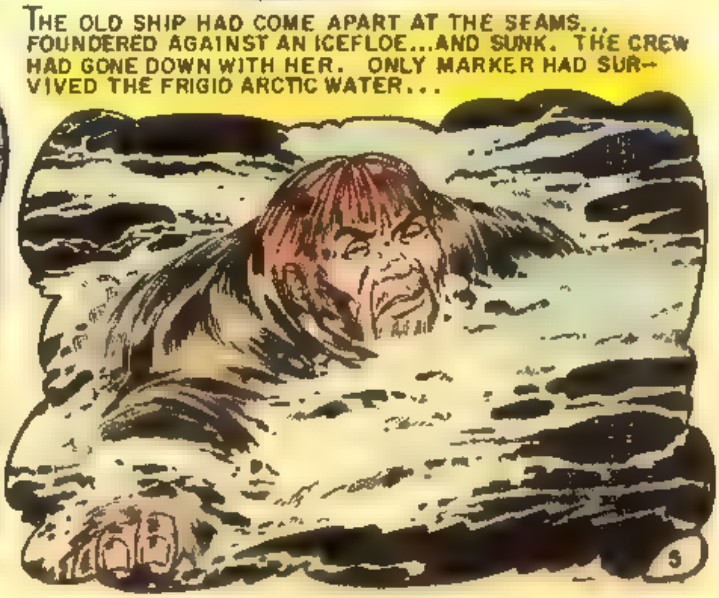

I AM YANUK! I GO WHITE MAN'S SCHOOL! YOU MUST *STOP!* SEALS ARE MY PEOPLE'S *FOOD!* IF WE *ARE* WITHOUT SEALS, WE *STARVE!* YOU MUST *STOP!*
GET OUT OF HERE, ESKIMO!
WE *BEG* YOU! YOU HAVE *TAKEN* MANY PELTS! LEAVE US *FOOD!* DO NOT KILL *ALL* SEALS OR WE *STARVE!* WHAT WILL OUR *CHILDREN* EAT? *STOP NOW!* DO NOT KILL *ALL* OF HERD!
I SAID *CLEAR OUT*, ESKIMO! I DON'T CARE *WHAT* YOU EAT!
PLEASE! HAVE *MERCY* ON US! WE ARE NOT *WARRIORS!* ALL WE ASK IS *FOOD! STOP! NOW! PLEASE!*
ALL RIGHT! YOU *ASKED* FOR IT, ESKIMO!


MARKER PULLED HIS REVOLVER. THE ESKIMOS BACK OFF, MURMERING! HE RAISED THE GUN AND FIRED
WITH SCREAMS OF TERROR, THE REST OF THE ESKIMOES FLED.
THEY WON'T BE BACK TO BOTHER US! BACK TO WORK, MEN!
MAYBE WE OUGHT TO QUIT, MARKER. LET'S LEAVE THE POOR DEVILS SOME SEALS! WE'VE GOT ENOUGH PELTS! I DON'T LIKE
WHY YOU CHICKEN-HEARTED WEAKLING! I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT TO LIKE AND WHAT NOT TO LIKE...
UNNNNGH...

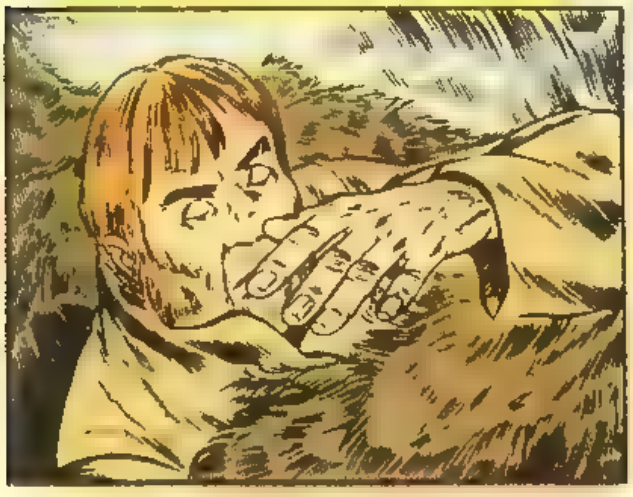

AND SO IT'D BEGUN. THE WANTON KILLING OF SEAL HERD AFTER SEAL HERD. AND WITH THE SLAUGHTER, EACH ESKIMOE VILLAGE HAD FOUND ITSELF WITHOUT ITS FOOD SUPPLY. SOON, THE OLD WHALER, LADEN WITH RICH PELTS, BEGAN ITS HOMEWARD JOURNEY. BUT BEFORE LAND WAS CLEARED, A FUNNEL-SHAPED, OMINOUS CLOUD DARKENED THE SKY...
MARKER! WHAT IS IT?
LORD HELP US! IT'S A... A... WILLIWAW!
GET ALOFT! REEF SAIL! IF SHE HITS US WITH ALL THIS CANVAS, WE'RE GONERS!

WILLIWAW! THE DREAD ARCTIC TORNADO THAT STRIKES WITH THE FURY OF A THOUSAND TORNADOES! SHRIEKING...TEARING. .SMASHING...THE HOWLING BANSHEE WIND CAUGHT THE OLD WHALING SHIP, RIPPING AT HER CANVAS, SNAPPING HER SHROUDS, SPLINTERING HER MASTS.


AND WHEN THE DEMONIAC WIND HAD PASSED, AS SUDDENLY AS IT HAD COME, IT LEFT BEHIND A SCENE OF HAVOC AND DEATH...


THE OLD SHIP HAD COME APART AT THE SEAMS... FOUNDERED AGAINST AN ICEFLOE...AND SUNK. THE CREW HAD GONE DOWN WITH HER. ONLY MARKER HAD SURVIVED THE FRIGID ARCTIC WATER...
5

HE LAY NOW IN THE IGLOO BENEATH THE ROTTING FURS. THE MEMORIES FADING WITH HIS STRENGTH. HE WONDERED HOW LONG HE'D BEEN LYING THERE. HE WAS AWARE, SUDDENLY, OF THE CRUEL SHARP PANGS OF HUNGER GNAWING AT HIS INSIDES. HE STIRRED



HE STUMBLED FROM THE IGLOO, BARELY ABLE TO DRAG HIMSELF. HE UNDERSTOOD NOW. THIS WAS YANUK'S VILLAGE. OR ONE OF THE VILLAGES THAT HAD DEPENDED UPON THE SEAL HERDS FOR FOOD. THE SEAL HERDS THAT HE D WANTONLY SLAUGHTERED

HE FELL UPON HIS KNEES THEN, AS YANUK HAD DONE. BEGGING TO THE WIND AND THE EMPTY, DESERTED IGLOOS

AND THEN HIS WILD ROVING EYES SAW THEM ON THE SHORE. WASHED UP BY THE ARCTIC WATERS. FRAGMENTS OF THE WRECK, CRATES, BOXES. A DESPERATE SURGE OF HOPE OVERWHELMED HIM.

SUMMONING HIS LAST OUNCE OF STRENGTH, MARKER STUMBLED THROUGH THE SNOW

AND AS HIS WEAKENED FROZEN FINGERS CLAWED AT THE CRATES AND RIPPED OPEN THE BOXES, HE KNEW THE AWFUL, AWFUL TRUTH.

YES, NOTHING BUT SEAL SKINS. RICH SLEEK PELTS FROM WHICH EVERY LAST VESTIGE OF MEAT HAD BEEN CAREFULLY SCRAPED. AND GUS MARKER SUDDENLY KNEW THAT HE, NOW, FACED THE SAME FATE THAT THE ESKIMO VILLAGE HAD FACED. STARVATION! ONLY, FOR HIM, THERE WAS NO ESCAPE...

LOOK FOR THEM ON YOUR NEWSSTAND!

(THE MAGS...NOT THE CHARACTERS!)

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SAILOR FOR QUEEN BESS

Out of the mists came the great ships of war, that day in 1588, when the King of Spain had gathered the most powerful fleet in history to sweep the British from the Channel and pave the way for a land invasion of the British Isles. To oppose the Great Armada were only a handful of ships manned by hardy British mariners and commanded by a slight, bearded man named Francis Drake

Anxious watchers scanned the Channel for signs of the invasion fleet and coastal dwellers prepared to flee inland, for, according to the reports, no force on earth could stand against the overwhelming power of the Spanish. Men dug trenches in the fields and prepared to die fighting for their homes and families, while fear gripped the British Isles. But there was no fear aboard the frigates and barkantines that made up the English Navy. These men had come to grips with the Spanish before. They had driven the King of Spain's ships from the wide Atlantic, from the calm Pacific, from the peaceful Caribbean. They had raided his treasure chests and store houses. These bold Englishmen had truly singed the King's beard. Only the year before, with thirty small ships, they had sailed into the harbor of Cadiz and there had burned ten thousand tons of shipping, right under the guns of the fortress guarding the harbor mouth and had escaped without losing a man or a ship

The British had something more valuable than frigates and cannon on their side. They had Sir Francis Drake, the greatest sailor of his time, who had taken his ship "The Golden Hind" all around the world. He also won fame for his daring tactics as a privateer. He sacked and plundered every major Spanish port in the New World and captured the shipping and gold on galleons headed for Spain on all the known shipping routes. It was this man who commanded the defending British fleet as the Armada hove into view.

Legend has it that Drake was ashore, bowling a game of duck pins when the alarm was given As his officers nervously glanced seaward, Drake is supposed to have insisted on finishing the game before he gave the word to board ship and sail to meet the enemy. There is no proof of this—but there is plenty of proof as to the way Drake handled the Armada. The cumbersome Spanish frigates had trouble maneuvering in the treacherously rough waters of the English Channel—but, the faster, lighter British ships responded to the helm beautifully. In a matter of minutes, the big ships of the Armada were burning as the British poured shot into them, firing with uncanny accuracy. In fact, the enemy was so fear stricken that the flagship of the Armada, captained by one Don Pedro de Valdez, struck its colors as soon as the captain learned that Drake was commanding the enemy, so awe-inspiring was Drake's reputation.

However, his brilliant career ended under a cloud. With Sir John Hawkins, he led an expedition against Spanish possessions in the West Indies. After an argument with Hawkins, Drake died aboard his own ship under mysterious circumstances.

SOLITARY

ONLY TWO OTHER LIVING MEN KNEW THE AWFUL SECRET THAT HAUNTED CAPTAIN JONATHAN WADE, MASTER OF THE SCHOONER *NAUTILUS*, PLYING THE SOUTH PACIFIC TRADE ROUTES. FROM ALL OUTWARD APPEARANCES, WADE WAS A HARD MAN. HE RAN A TIGHT SHIP WHICH HE RULED WITHOUT MERCY, METING OUT CRUEL PENALTIES FOR EVEN THE SLIGHTEST INFRACTION OF HIS RULES. BUT UNDERNEATH, JONATHAN WADE WAS A FRIGHTENED MAN. AND THE ONE THING HE FEARED ABOVE ALL ELSE WAS BEING ALONE. PERHAPS THAT IS WHY HE FOUND IT A MOST EFFECTIVE PUNISHMENT FOR OTHERS...

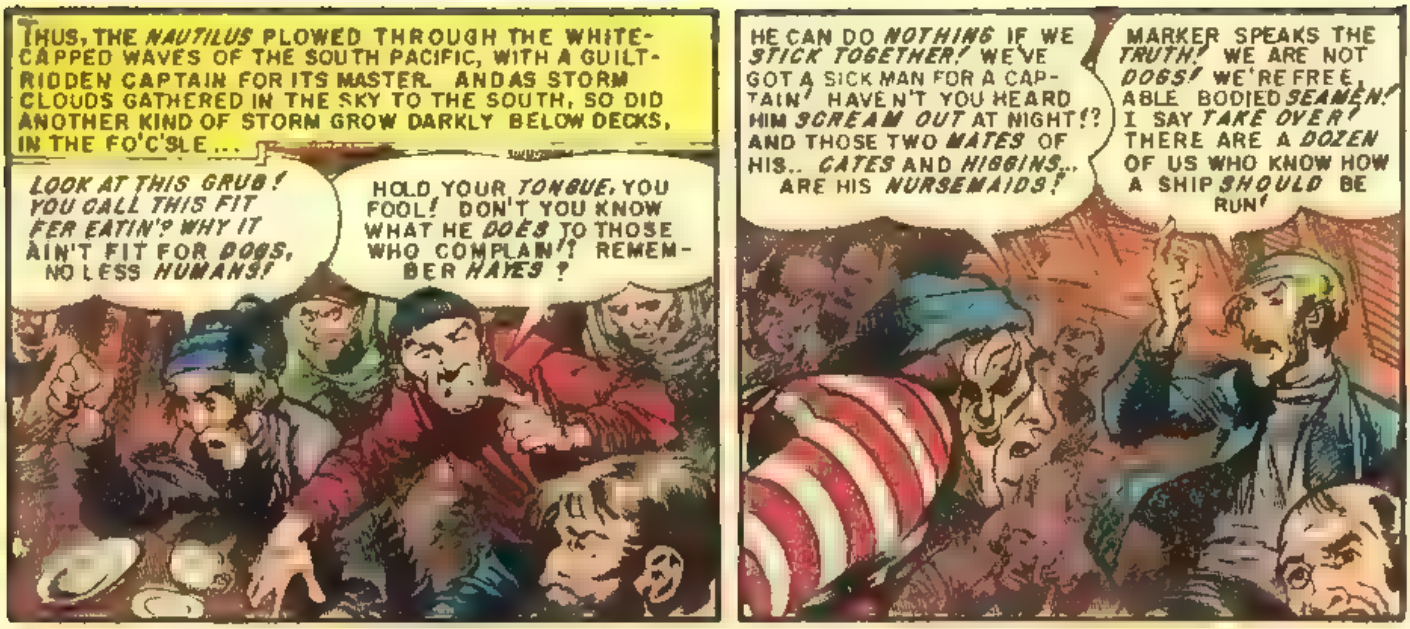
WADE'S A *DEVIL*, SETTIN' HAYES ADRIFT IN THE LONGBOAT! AN' FOR *WHAT?*
HAYES SHOULD HAVE *KNOWN* THAT A MAN CAN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT THE *GRUB* ABOARD A SHIP WHERE *JONATHAN WADE* IS MASTER!
JACK HAYS

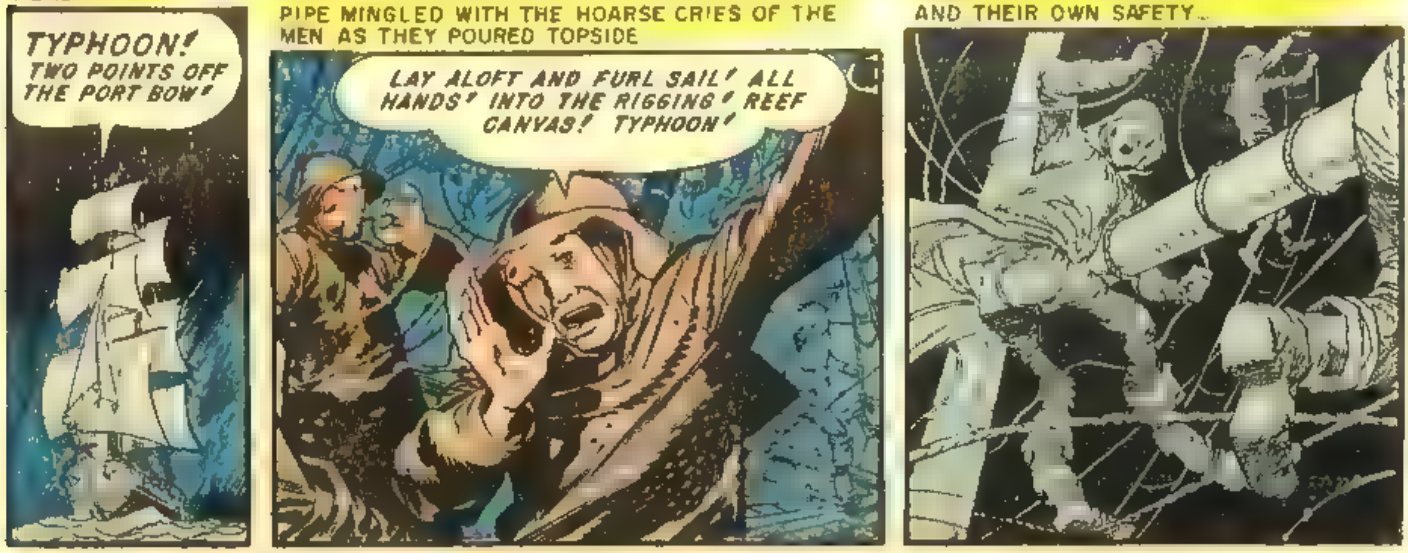
MAYBE YOU'LL LEARN YOUR *LESSON*, HAYES, NOW THAT YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY O' TIME T' *THINK* ABOUT IT! NOBODY TALKS MUTINY ON *MY* SHIP! IF YOU'RE *LUCKY*, YOU MIGHT COME ADRIFT ON SOME CORAL *REEF BEFORE* YOUR FOOD AN' WATER RUNS OUT!
AYE, AN' *THEN* WHAT? MAROONED ON SOME DOT O' LAND, WITH NARY A SHIP PASSIN' AN' NO HOPE O' BEIN' RESCUED! 'TIS A *HARD FATE!*
LISTEN! HAYES IS *CALLIN' OUT!* WHAT'S HE SAYIN'?

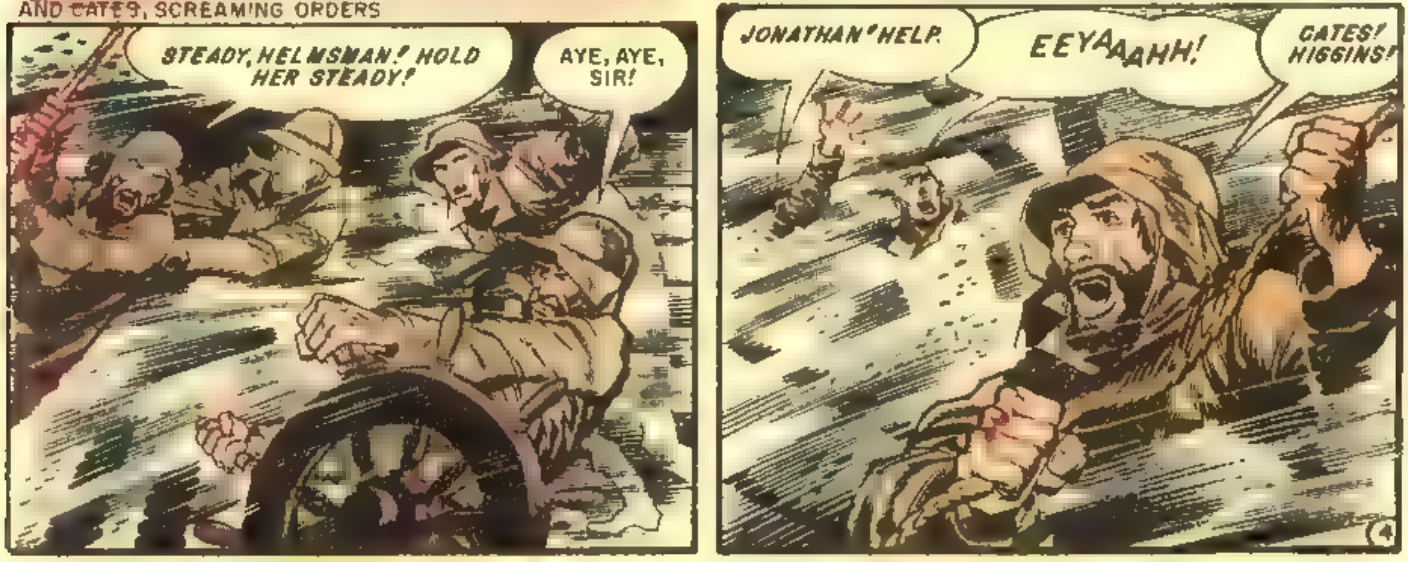
AS THE LONGBOAT WAS CARRIED SWIFTLY AWAY FROM THE *NAUTILUS*, HAYES SHOUTED HIS ANATHEMA, WHICH DRIFTED FAINTLY ACROSS THE WAVES.

LISTEN TO HIM RAVE! THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAY! WE'LL MEET AGAIN! HMMPH! AND WHERE ARE THEY ALL NOW? THE OTHERS? IN DAVEY JONES' LOCKER.. FORTY FATHOMS DEEP WHERE HE'LL BE, IN A WEEK OR SO! COME ON, CATES.. HIGGINS! JOIN ME IN SOME WINE.. IN MY CABIN...
ABNER CATES AND WILLIS HIGGINS FOLLOWED THEIR CAPTAIN TO HIS CABIN, WHERE WADE BROKE OUT A BOTTLE OF PORT...
AH, 'TIS THE FINEST RUBY PORT, M' LADS! A WINE FIT FOR A KING! I..I.. AN' WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, CATES?
I.. I WAS THINKIN' ABOUT POOR HAYES, OUT THERE... ALONE WITH THE WIND AND SEA! CAP'N, MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO HARSH ON 'IM?
YOU THINK I WAS WRONG, EH? AN' YOU, HIGGINS? YOU AGREE?
THE POOR BEGGAR DIDN'T DO ANYTHING T' MERIT SUCH A FATE, CAP'N! MAYBE BREAD AND WATER AND TEN DAYS IN IRONS. BUT NOT BEIN' CAST ADRIFT! IT WASN'T RIGHT, CAP'N!
YOU SPINELESS SCUTS! NOW THAT IT'S OVER, YOU'D THROW THE BLAME ON ME! YOU VOTED TO PUT HIM ADRIFT! WHY DIDN'T YOU STAND UP T'ME THEN? GET OUT! GET OUT OF THIS CABIN!
CAP'N... LISTEN..
DON'T WASTE YOUR BREATH, CATES! THERE'S NO REASONING WITH HIM WHEN HE'S LIKE THIS! C'MON! HE'LL COOL OFF IN A WHILE!
COOL OFF!? YOU THINK I NEED YOU BOTH!? THAT I CAN'T GET ON WITHOUT YOU!? WELL, YOU'RE WRONG! YOU'RE DEAD WRONG! YOU'RE GOIN' ASHORE AT THE FIRST PORT WE HIT! WE'LL SEE WHO'LL COOL OFF IN A WHILE! GET OUT! OUT!
HIS MATES, HIGGINS AND CATES, LEFT, AND CAPTAIN JONATHAN WADE, ALONE IN HIS CABIN, POURED CUP AFTER CUP OF WINE, BUT THE DULLING LIQUID DID NOT ERASE THE FEAR THAT CAME CREEPING OUT OF HIS MEMORY..
I'LL SHOW 'EM! JONATHAN WADE NEEDS NOBODY! NOBODY! I CAN GET ON ALONE! I'LL...SHOW 'EM..
OH, LORD! I CAN'T! NO! I CAN'T BE ALONE! I'LL HEAR THEIR SCREAMS AGAIN! I'LL SEE THEM! NO! I CAN'T GO IT ALONE! I CAN'T!
2

CATES! HIGGINS! WHERE ARE YOU?
WE'RE HERE, CAP'N! IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT!
HELP ME... SOB.. HELP ME!
GET HIM BACK IN THE CABIN BEFORE ANY OF THE CREW SEES HIM LIKE THIS!
HIGGINS! CATES! MAKE 'EM STOP! I HEAR 'EM! THEIR SHRIEKS! THEIR SCREAMS! I HEAR THEM CALLIN' ME! PLEADIN'! BEGGIN'! MAKE 'EM STOP! MAKE 'EM GO AWAY! DON'T LEAVE ME! I'M AFRAID! I'M AFRAID T' BE ALONE!
ALL RIGHT, JONATHAN! IT'S ALL RIGHT! HUSH, NOW! ME AN ABNER ARE WITH YOU! YOU'RE NOT ALONE! WE'LL NOT LEAVE YOU ALONE! WE WE CAN'T! WE'RE TARRED WITH THE SAME GUILTY BRUSH .. BOUND BY THE SAME SIN! YOU AN' ME. AN ABNER!
AYE, WILLY! WHAT MADNESS MUST HAVE BEEN UPON US TO HAVE DONE THAT AWFUL, AWFUL THING! LEAV N THE VALERIE WHEN SHE CAUGHT FIRE. LEAVIN' THOSE POOR DEVILS TO THE FLAMES AND THE OPEN SEA WHILE WE THREE TOOK T' THE ONLY LONG-BOAT AND ESCAPED SAVIN' OURSELVES AND LEAVIN' THEM TO D E
AYE, ABNER, AND THAT AWFUL, AWFUL DEED HAS FORGED A CHAIN T' SHACKLE US. EACH T' THE OTHER 'AN' HIM, AFRAID T' BE ALONE... EVEN FOR AN HOUR, LEST THE WHOLE THING COME BACK T' HIM AND DRIVE HIM MAD!
WE'RE LOST, ABNER WILLIS! WE'RE LOST! EACH CRUELTY BRINGS ON ANOTHER! THE THING WE DID HAS ROBBED US OF OUR SOULS!
NONE OF THAT, NOW, JONATHAN! YOU D BEST BE GETTIN' SOME SLEEP!
YOU'LL LEAVE THE LIGHT? YOU'LL BE ON HAND IF I NEED YOU?
AYE, JONATHAN! ONE OF US WILL BE OUT-SIDE YOUR DOOR! NOW, GO TO SLEEP!
HE'S IN A BAD WAY, ABNER! I'M AFRAID THAT IF HE'S LEFT ALONE, THERE'S NO KNOWING WHAT HE MIGHT DO
OR IF WE DON'T GUARD HIM THROUGH THE NIGHT, ONE OF THE FO'C'SLE HANDS MIGHT TRY SOMETHING!
3


THUS, THE NAUTILUS PLOWED THROUGH THE WHITE-CAPPED WAVES OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC, WITH A GUILT-RIDDEN CAPTAIN FOR ITS MASTER. AND AS STORM CLOUDS GATHERED IN THE SKY TO THE SOUTH, SO DID ANOTHER KIND OF STORM GROW DARKLY BELOW DECKS, IN THE FO'C'SLE...
LOOK AT THIS GRUB! YOU CALL THIS FIT FER EATIN'? WHY IT AIN'T FIT FOR DOGS, NO LESS HUMANS!
HOLD YOUR TONGUE, YOU FOOL! DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT HE DOES TO THOSE WHO COMPLAIN? REMEMBER HAYES?
HE CAN DO NOTHING IF WE STICK TOGETHER! WE'VE GOT A SICK MAN FOR A CAPTAIN! HAVEN'T YOU HEARD HIM SCREAM OUT AT NIGHT!? AND THOSE TWO MATES OF HIS.. CATES AND HIGGINS... ARE HIS NURSEMAIDS!
MARKER SPEAKS THE TRUTH! WE ARE NOT DOGS! WE'RE FREE, ABLE BODIED SEAMEN! I SAY TAKE OVER! THERE ARE A DOZEN OF US WHO KNOW HOW A SHIP SHOULD BE RUN!


BUT AT THAT MOMENT, A CRY CAME FROM MASTHEAD
TYPHOON! TWO POINTS OFF THE PORT BOW!
TYPHOON! THE SCOURGE OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC! THE BLACK, FUNNEL-SHAPED CLOUD THAT SPELLED DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO ALL IN ITS VIOLENT PATH. THE FRANTIC SHRILLING OF THE BOS'UN'S PIPE MINGLED WITH THE HOARSE CRIES OF THE MEN AS THEY POURED TOPSIDE
LAY ALOFT AND FURL SAIL! ALL HANDS! INTO THE RIGGING! REEF CANVAS! TYPHOON!
THE DANGER OF THE MENACING TYPHOON DROVE ALL OTHER THOUGHTS FROM THE MEN AS THEY SCRAMBLED INTO THE RIGGING, THINKING NOW ONLY OF THE SHIP AND THEIR OWN SAFETY..


WITH A DEMONIACAL SHRIEK, THE TYPHOON STRUCK THE NAUTILUS WAS RAKED BY GIANT WAVES AND LASHING WINDS. WADE STOOD ON THE QUARTERDECK WITH HIGGINS AND CATES, SCREAMING ORDERS
STEADY, HELMSMAN! HOLD HER STEADY!
AYE, AYE, SIR!
SUDDENLY, A MOUNTAIN OF WATER ENGULFED THE SHIP, SWEEPING THE QUARTERDECK, SUCKING THREE OF THE FOUR MEN UPON IT INTO ITS ROILING MAW
JONATHAN! HELP!
EEYAAAHH!
CATES! HIGGINS!
4

CAPTAIN JONATHAN WADE STARED AT THE WATER-SWEPT DECK AROUND HIM...

CATES! HIGGINS! COME BACK! DON'T LEAVE ME!

...AND IT WAS AS IF THE SCREAMING WIND SQUEALED WITH LAUGHTER AS THE WILD-EYED WADE REALIZED...

GONE! THEY'RE GONE! I'M ALONE! ALONE!

CAP'N! CAP'N! THE HELM! WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS?

BUT THE CAPTAIN HAD NO ORDERS. HE CLUNG TO THE GUNWALE, SOBBING SOFTLY..

CATES! HIGGINS! COME BACK! DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE! DON'T.. SOB... SOB...

CAP'N! WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS? CAP'N!

AS SUDDENLY AS IT HAD COME, THE TYPHOON RACED ON. THE CREW OF THE NAUTILUS GATHERED, EXHAUSTED, AROUND THEIR BABBLING, INCOHERENT CAPTAIN..

ALONE. SOB. ALONE...

TAKE HIM BELOW! WE'LL HOLD COURT, LATER! HE'S NOT FIT T'BE CAPTAIN ANYMORE! HE DESERTED HIS POST!

AYE! C'MON ALONG, YOU!

LATER, IN THE FO'C'SLE, A BARREL HEAD KANGAROO COURT HELD A QUICK TRIAL AND A VERDICT WAS REACHED...

WE SENTENCE YOU, JONATHAN WADE, TO BE RELIEVED OF YOUR COMMAND, YOU WILL CONFINE YOURSELF TO YOUR CABIN!

DO YOU HEAR, WADE? HAVE YOU NAUGHT TO SAY?

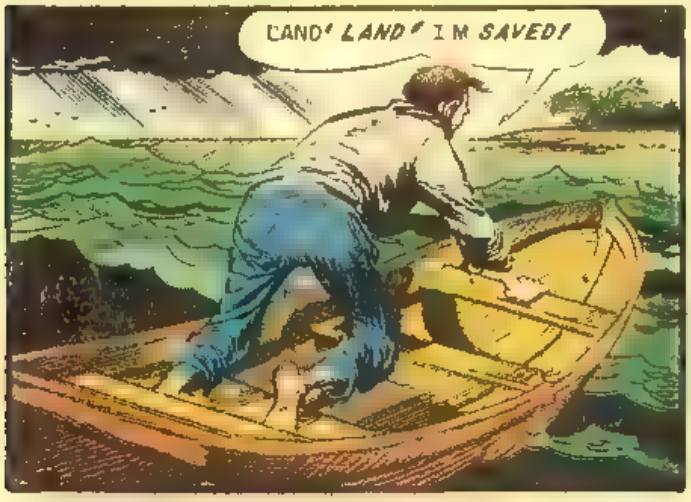
ALONE... SOB ALONE...

THAT NIGHT, JONATHAN WADE CREPT FROM HIS LONELY CABIN TO THE DECK AND LOWERED A LONGBOAT

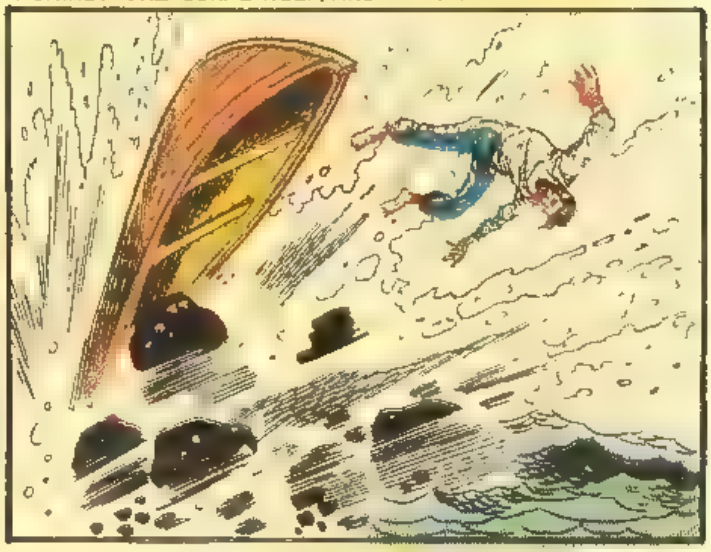
I'VE GOT TO FIND THEM! I CAN'T STAND BEING ALONE! I'VE GOT TO FIND CATES AND HIGGINS...

AND SO, JONATHAN WADE SET HIMSELF ADRIFT BENT, IN HIS WILD FEAR, UPON FINDING HIS STORM WASHED COMRADES SOMEWHERE IN THE OPEN SEA...

FOR DAYS, THE WIDE-EYED MAN DRIFTED AIMLESSLY... RAVING IN HIS DELIRIUM. AND THEN, AS THE TERROR PAST AND THE WILL TO LIVE GREW STRONG, SOMEHOW, WADE REGAINED THE SPARK OF SANITY HE NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND HIS PLIGHT. FINALLY, ON THE EIGHTH DAY



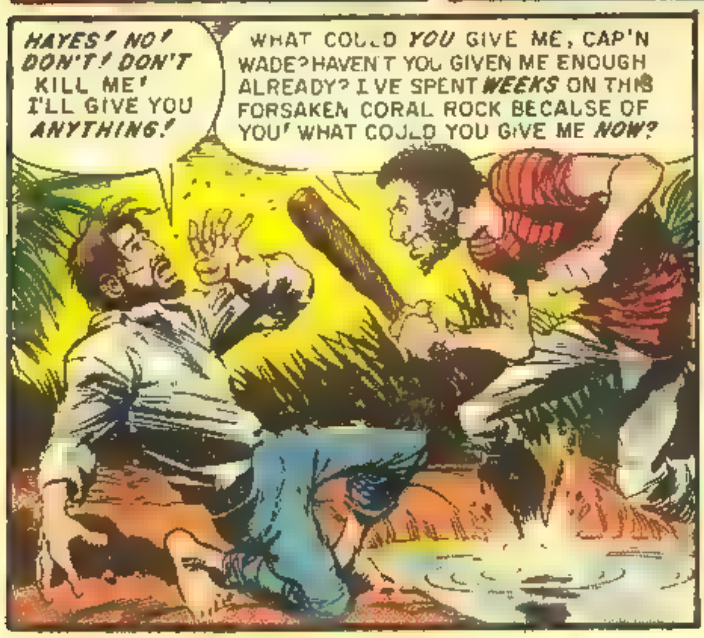
THE ROLLING BREAKERS CAUGHT THE LONGBOAT AND HURLED IT TOWARD THE DESERTED BEACH, SMASHING IT AGAINST THE CORAL REEF, AND THROWING WADE CLEAR .

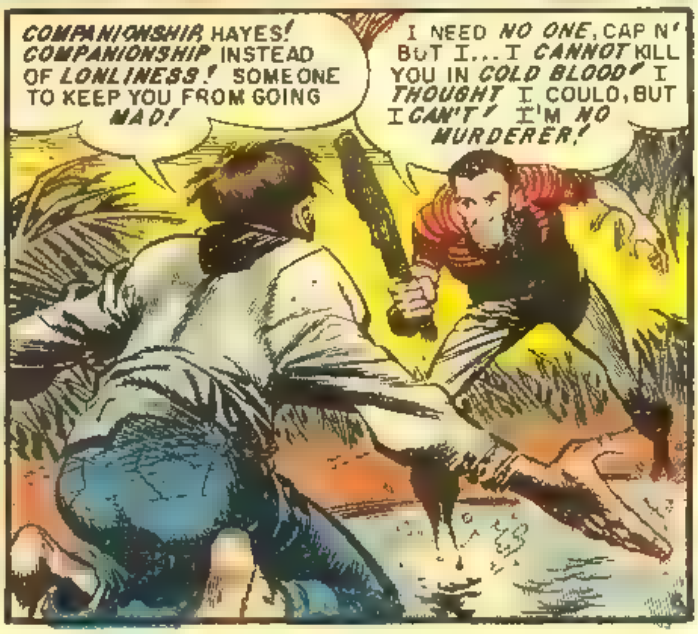


HE STUMBLED ASHORE . TO A LIMPID, CRYSTAL-CLEAR POOL, WHERE HE SPRAWLED IN EXHAUSTION AND DRANK HIS FILL

BUT SUDDENLY, A MOVEMENT CAUGHT HIS EYE...

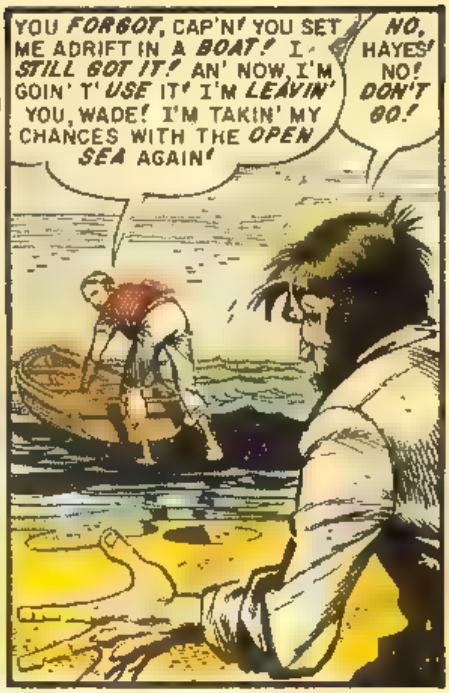
CHOKE HAYES!
AYE, CAP'N! HAYES! HAYES WITH HIS PRAYERS ANSWERED! AND HOW I PRAYED FOR THIS MOMENT! I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU COME T'BE HERE... BUT I'M ASKIN' NO QUESTIONS!


HAYES! NO! DON'T! DON'T KILL ME! I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING!
WHAT COULD YOU GIVE ME, CAP'N WADE? HAVEN'T YOU GIVEN ME ENOUGH ALREADY? I'VE SPENT WEEKS ON THIS FORSAKEN CORAL ROCK BECAUSE OF YOU! WHAT COULD YOU GIVE ME NOW?


COMPANIONSHIP, HAYES! COMPANIONSHIP INSTEAD OF LONLINESS! SOMEONE TO KEEP YOU FROM GOING MAD!
I NEED NO ONE, CAP'N! BUT I... I CANNOT KILL YOU IN COLD BLOOD! I THOUGHT I COULD, BUT I CAN'T! I'M NO MURDERER!

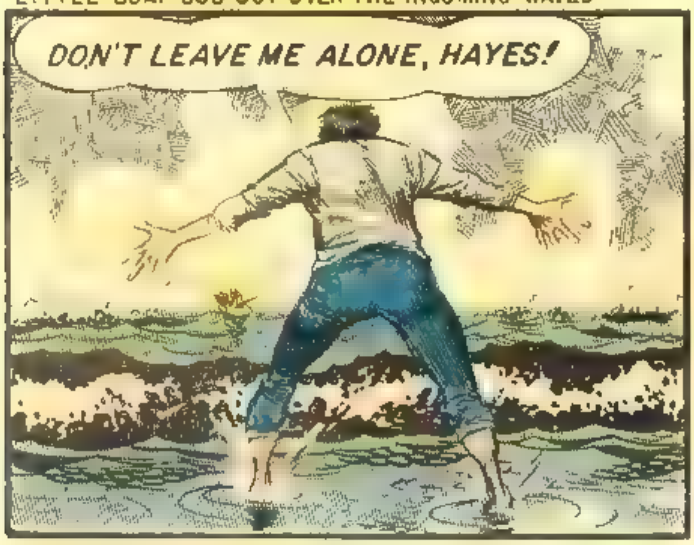
THE SEEDY SEAMAN TOSSED HIS CLUB TO THE SAND AND TURNED AWAY .

NO, CAP'N WADE! I CANNOT KILL YOU! BUT I CAN LEAVE YOU TO SUFFER THE FATE YOU FORCED ON ME! I'M LEAVIN' THIS ISLAND, CAP'N!
LEAVIN'? B-BUT, HOW?


YOU FORGOT, CAP'N! YOU SET ME ADRIFT IN A BOAT! I- STILL GOT IT! AN' NOW, I'M GOIN' T' USE IT! I'M LEAVIN' YOU, WADE! I'M TAKIN' MY CHANCES WITH THE OPEN SEA AGAIN!
NO, HAYES! NO! DON'T GO!

THE PALM TREES ON THE DESERTED SHORE RUSTLED IN THE TROPIC BREEZE. FROM FAR OFF IN HIS MEMORY, WADE HEARD FAINT SOUNDS ..

THE SOUNDS GREW LOUDER, NOW, AS WADE WATCHED THE LITTLE BOAT BOB OUT OVER THE INCOMING WAVES



AND THEN THE BOAT WAS GONE. AND THE SOUNDS WERE ALL AROUND HIM NOW. THE SOUNDS OF PEOPLE SCREAMING

BUT HAYES DID NOT COME BACK. THE ONLY THING THAT CAME BACK TO JONATHAN WADE WAS AN AWFUL MEMORY OF A BURNING SHIP ..

AND JONATHAN WADE WAS ALONE .. WITH HIS MEMORIES... AND HIS CONSCIENCE...

THE END

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